

Does Hollywood Hate Val Kilmer?

Entertainment WEEKLY

329 • MAY 31, 1996

CHER
LAID
BARE

CANNES
GOODS!

Why the diva
dropped out and
how she plans
to come back



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Calvin Klein
underwear

Entertainment WEEKLY

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1996

NEWS & NOTES

6/The Mary Month of May The networks' recently announced fall lineups prove that love is all around again—in the form of *Mary Tyler Moore Show* knockoffs...Will Greg Kinnear give up his night job?...The stars get a bang out of *Mission: Impossible*'s Los Angeles premiere...Sylvester Stallone's little movie is getting a lot bigger...HOT SHEET...FLASHES...MONITOR...and more.

16/Being There E3 shows off new interactive entertainment.

20/Fights Julie Andrews snubs the Tonys and puts CBS' little-watched awards show in the spotlight. **PLUS:** EW's Tony picks.

FEATURES

22/COVER Cher Determination BY DANA KENNEDY After years of career-bruising infomercials, Cher comes clean about her mistakes, her ambitions, and her equally outspoken ex-husband Sonny Bono and their daughter, Chastity.

28/Catch as Catch Cannes BY ANNE THOMPSON The stars, the stargazers, and the movies themselves bared all at the Riviera resort's 49th annual film festival.

32/Psycho Kilmer BY REBECCA ASCHER-WALSH With a growing record of atrocious on-set behavior, Val Kilmer has Hollywood wondering if the de-caped crusader's got bats in his belfry.

REVIEWS

39/MOVIES OWEN GLEIBERMAN on *Mission: Impossible*; also *Spy Hard*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*. **PLUS:** *Twister* questions.

47/TELEVISION KEN TUCKER on *Coach*, *Dave's World*, *Harry Anderson: The Tricks of His Trade*, and *Wings*. **PLUS:** New shows this summer; *Politically Incorrect*'s Chris Rock.

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62/MULTIMEDIA TY BURR on websites devoted to summer movies. **PLUS:** *Klingon* CD-ROM director Jonathan Frakes.

66/VIDEO TY BURR on *Get Shorty* and other movies based on Elmore Leonard novels. **PLUS:** Mobsters go Hollywood.

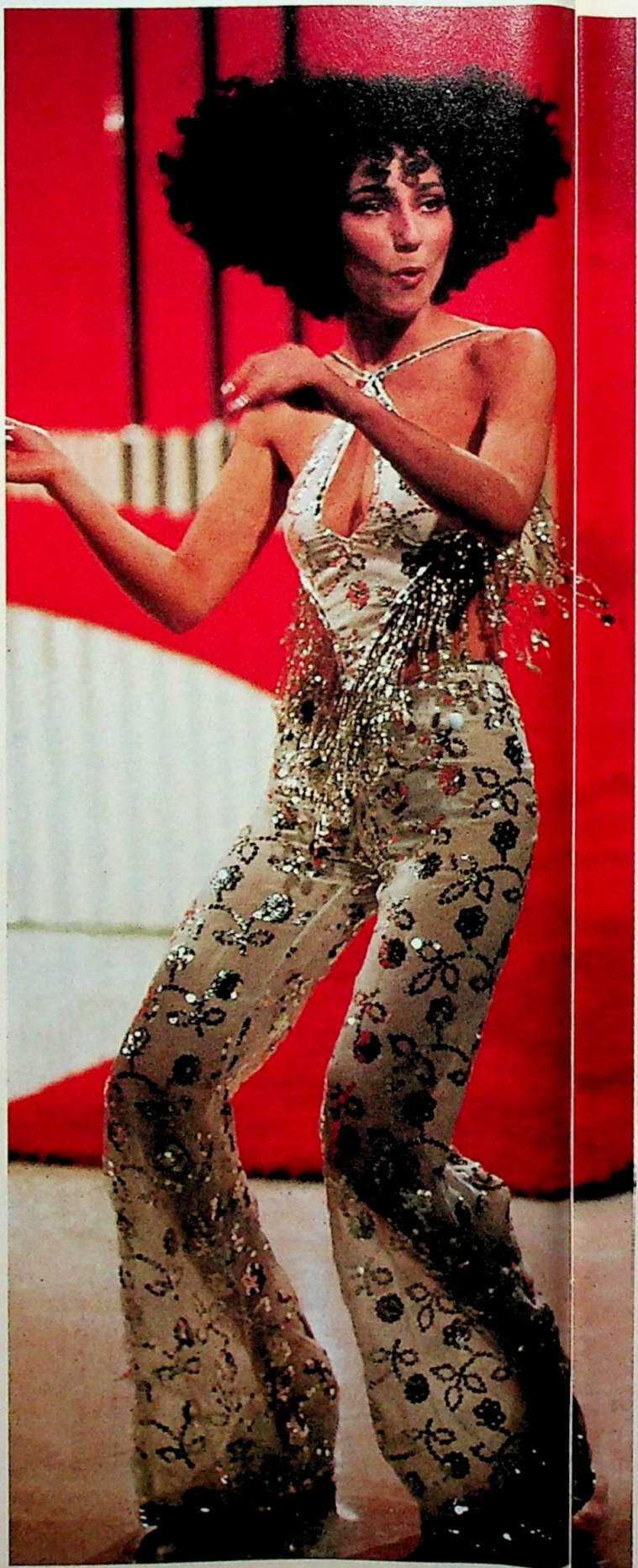
DEPARTMENTS

4/Mail Praise for *Chicago Hope* and Daniel Benzali of *Murder One*.

72/Encore May 24, 1974: Jazz great Duke Ellington dies.

Cover CHER: DAVID SCHEINMANN

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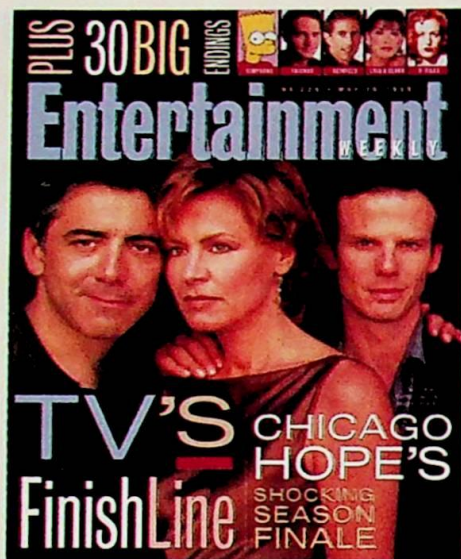
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THE CHER SHOW

A photographic review of the constantly evolving look of Cherilyn Sarkisian, a.k.a. Cher. For an update on what she's up to now, see page 22.

PALETT: STEVE SHAPIRO/ONYX; TOP: PHOT; LEFT: SCOTT DONNICK/CELEBRITY PHOTO; BOB SCOTT/NEAL; PETERS COLLECTION; EVERETT COLLECTION; MIDDLE: DON OMNITZ/LORE PHOTOS; EVERETT; MICHAEL; CHILDERS/ONYX; BOTTOM: CHUCK MULLEN/STAR FILE; MICHAEL; OCHS ARCHIVES; JOHN PASCHAU/CELEBRITY PHOTO



'HOPE' AND GLORY

THANK YOU for the wonderful pictures and article on *Chicago Hope* (#326, May 10). Finally you realized that there are *two* medical dramas on television. What took you so long?!?!?

DIANNE ARMSTRONG
DArmstr133@aol.com
Oshawa, Ontario

I HAVE THREE words regarding your cover on *Chicago Hope*: It's about time.

LISA WARD
LisaWard@best.com
San Jose, Calif.

'ONE' THAT GOT AWAY

IT'S SAD TO see that ABC may cast aside a great show like *Murder One* for what will likely be an inferior hour of TV next season. Although I'm generally in full agreement with your reviews, Ken Tucker was *way* off base on his assessment of *Murder's* Daniel Benzali. Benzali is the glue that binds the show together.

PHIL SULAK
shadowpaw@aol.com
Austin, Tex.

MIGHT MAKES 'WHITE'

IN RESPONSE to the Tony Hendra piece [on *The Great White Hype*]: Hendra's statement that in 1990 he had "an idea" made me see red. I approached Tony with the idea of doing a boxing film similar in style to *Spinal Tap*. He jumped at the opportunity. Hendra's statement that Ron Shelton was signed on as

writer-director is simply not true. Shelton made it clear to me that he was writing the screenplay for *me* to direct. Ultimately, as often happens in Hollywood, Fox decided to pay me my director's fee and instead go with Reggie Hudlin.

NEIL LEIFER
New York City

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

THANKS FOR pointing out the excessive smoking in *Mulholland Falls* ("Excess of the Week"). Perhaps you should include a "Puff Quotient" in all your film reviews. (Are the screenwriters taking payola from the tobacco companies?) If *The Ten Commandments* were remade today, Moses would probably use the burning bush to light up his stogie.

RALPH W. DANIEL
Marietta, Ga.

WAS IT a coincidence that an ad two pages before your review of Pamela Anderson Lee in *Barb Wire* touts the "Genetic engineering" marvels of The New Dodge? Couldn't the same claim be made of Anderson?

MARC VANASSE
New Milford, Conn.

BOIS ON THE SNIDE

IN JIM MULLEN'S latest Hot Sheet, he writes: "MICHAEL JACKSON—He bought a \$12 million château in France. He liked the place as soon as he heard the name: Petit Bois." I envy Mullen his job. I don't know of very many people in the media who could sustain a permanent job by showing such limited creativity.

HELEN PETERSON
Minneapolis

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NEWS & NOTES

MAY 31, 1996 • MOVIES, TV, BOOKS, MUSIC, MULTIMEDIA & VIDEO • EDITED BY MAGGIE MURPHY



SAYING FOUR HAIL MARYS

A new generation of TV women try to make it after all. **BY JESSICA SHAW**

Oh, Mr. Grant! More than two decades after Mary Richards first tossed her beret into the air, a new generation of TV execs are gamely trying to find another woman who can turn the world on with her smile. Look closely at the TV offerings planned for next season and you'll see—besides one too many *X-Files* rip-offs—a preponderance of series about endearing, spunky career girls. “Who knows how these trends happen?” says Fox Entertainment Group president John Matoian. “It does seem to come in groups on all networks.” Among the women who may be on the verge of a Mary breakthrough:

◆ *Friends* guest star-turned-Must See TVer **Brooke Shields** will play a newly single liter-



ary agent on NBC's *Suddenly Susan*. In one not-so-subtle pilot scene, Susan watches *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and tosses her remote in the air—only to have it clock her on the head. “Susan and Mary both have strength and a slightly endearing awkwardness,” says Shields.

◆ Stand-up comedian **Lisa Ann Walter** is an assistant state's attorney trying to balance love and a profession in ABC's *Life's Work*.

◆ Eighties refugee **Molly Ringwald** is a small-town New England girl on ABC's *Townies*. “There are similarities between my character and Mary,” Ringwald admits. “I’m the glue that keeps everyone else together.”

WANT MOORE? Left, Littlefield welcomes Shields to the Must See family; top, the original *MTM*

◆ Recent *NYPD Blue* dropout **Gail O'Grady** is a marketing executive with a chaotic love and work life in a series Fox will likely pick up as a mid-season replacement.



O'GRADY

Interestingly, the networks are in hot pursuit of a new Mary, even though—with the exception of *Roseanne*—sitcoms focusing on female characters have not fared well in recent years. The ratings for **Ellen DeGeneres'** *Ellen*—once thought of as a female version of *Seinfeld*—have dropped precipitously over the last year. *Murphy Brown*, a top 10 staple during its first three seasons, has now entered the *MacGyver* zone. And one of last year's new single-girl shows, the irritating *Caroline in the City*, starring **Lea Thompson**, will likely slip in the ratings once it vacates its cushy post-*Seinfeld* slot for the less appealing Tuesdays at 9:30 p.m.

So why not just find the next Murray Slaughter? "Two years ago we identified a goal: a sitcom with a woman at its center," says NBC Entertainment president **Warren Littlefield**.

"Step one was *Caroline in the City*. But that wasn't the be-all and end-all of that goal." Surely, Littlefield must have also found some inspiration in the ratings for *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, now rerunning on Nick at Nite and one of the network's most watched shows. (It has garnered such an overwhelming response that the cable

more women willing to watch than men, which is good for marketing," says media analyst Porter Bibb, managing director of Ladenburg, Thalmann & Co.

Though executives welcome the Mary comparisons, the leading ladies sound nervous at the prospect. "It's definitely a heavy responsibility," says Shields. "I have big shoes to fill—literally and figuratively." Then again, notes at least one other leading lady, maybe Mary's not the ticket after all. "My feeling about it is everybody wants to be Mary, but the world is made up of Rhodas," says *Life's Work*'s Lisa Ann Walter. "I certainly wouldn't mind being Ameri-



RINGWALD

ca's sweetheart, but I don't think I could ever wear hip huggers the way our Mary did, not on these child-bearing hips."

◆ (Additional reporting by Casey Davidson and Dan Snierson)

Repeat Performances

IN TV LAND, great minds really do think alike. Other trends of the coming TV season:

◆ **STARS '80S** Hoping you'll get that feeling again: *Family Ties*' **Michael J. Fox** is a New York City deputy mayor in *Spin City* (ABC); **Bill Cosby** plays a grumpy old man in the tentatively titled *Cosby* (CBS); *Cheers* alums **Ted Danson** and **Rhea Perlman** return with new series. Danson (along with his real wife, **Mary Steenburgen**) plays a newspaper reporter in *Ink* (CBS), while Perlman is a widow going back to school in *Pearl* (CBS).

◆ **SAY IT ANGST SO** *thirtysomething*'s weary adman **Ken Olin** (Michael) returns to TV as a cop in *EZ Streets* (CBS), while his former TV

wife, **Mel Harris** (Hope), gets a new husband and family in *Something So Right* (NBC). Even the show's creators, **Ed Zwick** and **Marshall Herskovitz**, are back, offering the drama *Relativity* (ABC), which will follow one couple's changing relationship.

◆ **THE LEAPFROG EFFECT** Looking for a second chance via the old network switcheroo: **Jeff Foxworthy**'s fish-out-of-water sitcom jumps from ABC to NBC; **LL Cool J**'s *In the House* moves from NBC to UPN; the Lawrence clan's *Brotherly Love* finds a new home over at the WB (they were on NBC); and *JAG* will likely be a mid-season replacement on CBS after falling off NBC's schedule. Yes, there will be a quiz later. —CD

College Tries

Put a cap and gown on a celeb and you never know what he's going to say. Take **Robert De Niro**, for instance, who, while addressing New York University's graduating class, said: "This is an honor for me. But it is not really. It's my day. But it's really your day." Which left the grads wondering, Are you talking to me? Here, a sampler of what other Classes of '96 heard on commencement day.

STAR: Bruce Willis. School: Montclair State (which gave Willis an honorary doctorate). Words of wisdom: "I've been playing doctor with my wife, Demi Moore, for a long time."

STAR: Steven Spielberg. School: NYU. Words of wisdom: "I have just one thing to say—take the future by storm." (Spielberg is the exec producer of *Twister*.)

STAR: Kermit the Frog. School: Southampton College of Long Island University. Words of wisdom: "I am sure that when you were children growing up back in your own swamps or suburbs, you never imagined you would sit here on one of the most important days of your life listening to a short, green, talking frog deliver your commencement address." —**Anna Holmes**



Jim Mullen's Hot Sheet

What the country is talking about this week...

1 DAYTIME EMMYS Some people would kidnap their third wife's evil twin to get one of these.

2 IVANKA TRUMP Donald and Ivana's 14-year-old daughter has become a model. Another graduate of the Tori Spelling School of Hard Knocks.

3 THE RUNAWAY JURY Would a tobacco company stop at nothing to win a case in John Grisham's latest? Does a bear smoke in the woods?

4 L.A. It has the worst restaurant tippers in the country. But where else do you have to promise to read the waiter's script?

5 IN MY OWN VOICE Model Cindy Crawford's inked a book deal. It must be good because it's very tall and thin.

6 PRINCE WILLIAM His Buffness is becoming a bubblegum pinup in Britain. Why not? He stars in one of its most popular soaps.

7 YOKO ONO She didn't know that ripping pages out of the Bible would offend people. It doesn't on her planet.

8 THE 1,000-POUND MAN They tore down a wall to get him out of his house. Luckily, it was made from Domino's Pizza boxes.

9 JOHN TESH He's leaving *Entertainment Tonight* to write more New Age music. You mean there's not enough?

10 PRINCESS DI She wants to buy the five-bedroom apartment once owned by Jackie O. It'll make a nice walk-in closet.

11 MARGAUX HEMINGWAY Another B-list celebrity starts a psychic hotline. She does sense one thing about you: that you're a sucker.

12 SEN. BRYANT GUMBEL Politics may be in the *Today* show host's future. Or he may decide to use his superpowers for good, not evil.

13 TERRY MCMILLAN'S HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK She called RuPaul and asked where he bought his.

14 COORS They've worked John Wayne into their new beer commercials. It must be pretty good if dead people like it.

15 MOUNT EVEREST If it gets any more popular, "Because it's there" may become "Because there's a Starbucks there."



GETTING 'LATER'

DON'T BE ALARMED, but another late-night baton swap may be in the works. According to a source, **Greg Kinnear** could be on the verge of turning over NBC's *Later*—and a lifetime supply of Somnifex—to talk-show-host alumnus **Jon Stewart**.

With Kinnear's film career even more atwitter than his eyebrows (he garnered good notices for *Sabrina*, has Paramount's *Dear God* in the can, and is about to film Rysher Entertainment's *A Smile Like Yours* opposite **Lauren Holly**), the former *Talk Soup*er, who's still under contract to NBC, has less and less time to devote to the show. Coincidentally, Stewart, who has subbed for Kinnear, has managed to establish his own beachhead in Hollywood (he'll be in Miramax's *Wishful Thinking* and Paramount's *The First Wives Club*). For now, both sides deny that there's a switch in the offing, but no one is ruling it out. "We're still planning to go with Greg," says NBC exec producer Gary Considine. "But Stewart is definitely a talented guy, and we'd like to make him part of the family." A spokesman for Stewart is even cagier: "It's hard to say what Jon wants now. We'll have to wait and see how the movies turn out." —*Jessica Shaw*



HOST TIME: Stewart (top, with Jason Priestley) and Kinnear

EW POLL



InDecision '96

LAST WEEK'S POLL RESULTS

Who argues more?
A. D.C.'s Bill and Hillary... **47%**
B. *Mad About You*'s Paul and Jamie Buchman... **53%**

THIS WEEK'S POLL TOPIC

The X-Files is?
A. A Fox series about paranormal events
B. Hillary Clinton's explanation of Whitewater

Cast your ballot at Comedy Central's website (<http://comcentral.com>) or by dialing 800-294-8015 (see the results on EW's website, <http://pathfinder.com/ew/>). Polling begins May 24 and ends May 28 at noon EDT. Vote now!



VERSACE

O U T O R E

RAATJ

SCENE Inside Mission

TOSS IN any more stars and the L.A. premiere of *Mission: Impossible* would have self-destructed. **1.** Tom Cruise, with Nicole Kidman, arrives and fulfills a dubious assignment: obligingly humming the film's theme song three times for fans. "This is definitely my favorite soundtrack," he says. **2.** Cruise and Kidman recruit his mother, Mary Lee, and stepfather, Jack South, to view his debut as a producer. "If I had the choice between being a producer and a secret agent, I would still be the producer," says Cruise. "I like the excitement of putting together an idea and watching it happen." **3.** Dweezil Zappa has a sidekick moment escorting Sharon Stone. **4.** *Mission*'s Ving Rhames and his spouse celebrate a special day.



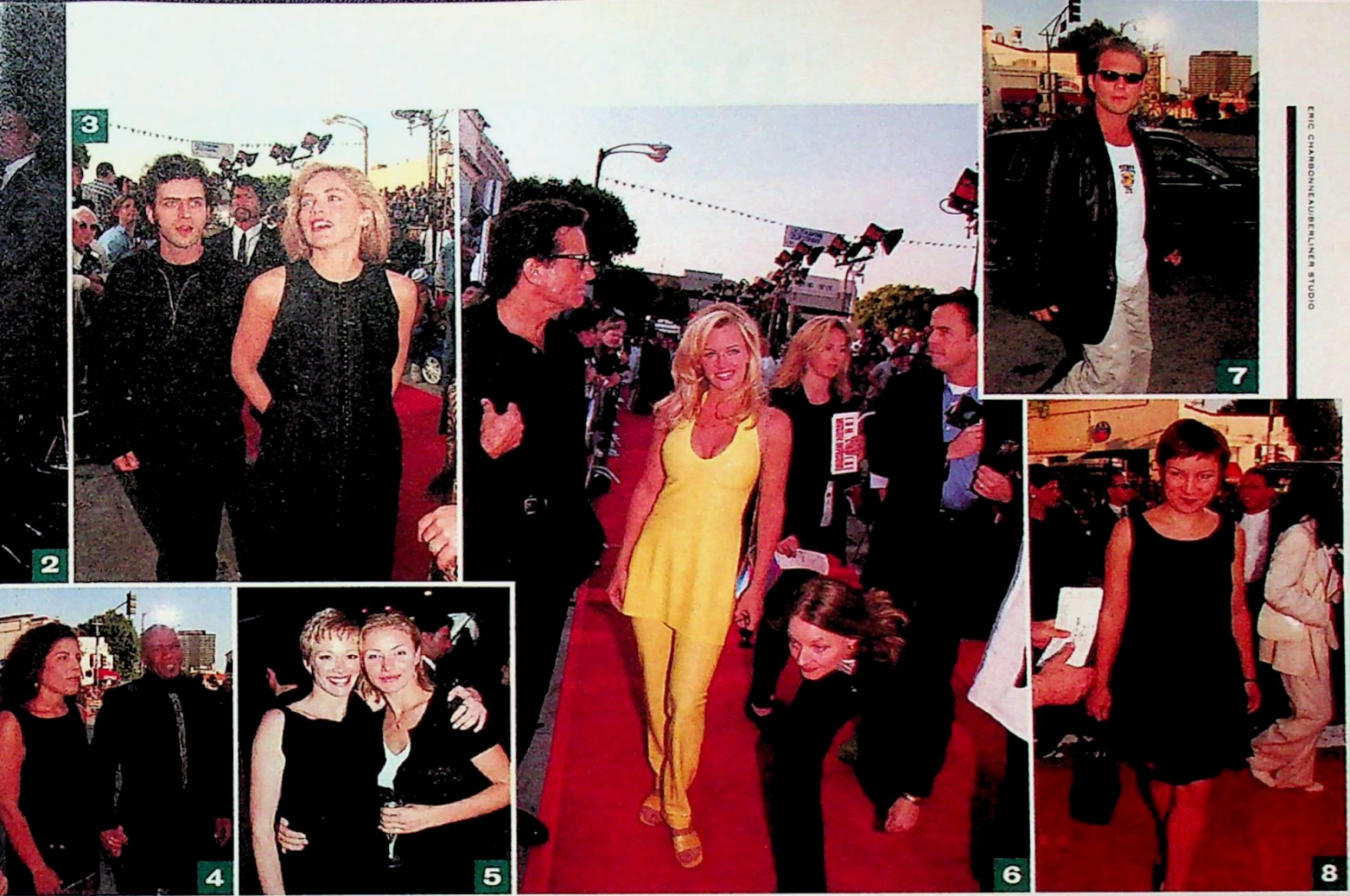
"This is my wife Valerie's birthday today," he says. **5.** A couple of white chicks—newly single Lauren Holly and *Mask* star Cameron Diaz—talk about...Jim Carrey? **6.** Jodie Foster tries to sneak by, allowing MTV's Jenny McCarthy to be singled out. **7.** Christian Slater stays under cover. **8.** Jennifer Tilly gives an unforced confession. "My impossible mission is to become a really, really, really big star," she says. Two words of advice: Try hard. —Degen Pener, with reporting by Michael Szymanski

EDDIE MURPHY THE NUTTY PROFESSOR

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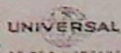
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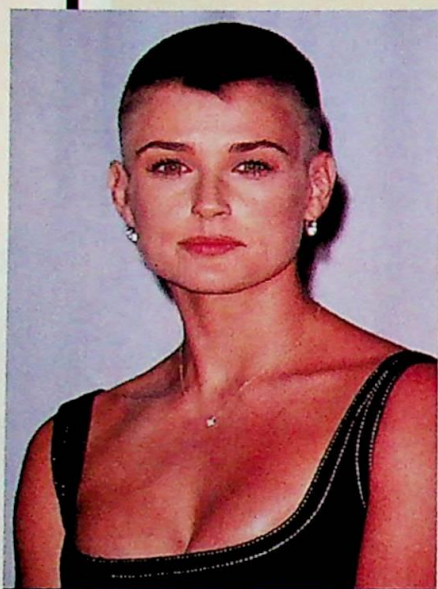
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 28TH SCREENPLAY BY DAVID SHEFFIELD & BARRY W. BLAUSTEIN AND TOM SHADYAC & STEVE ODEKERK PRODUCED BY BRIAN GRAZER RUSSELL SIMMONS DIRECTED BY TOM SHADYAC A UNIVERSAL PICTURE



FLASHES



SHORN FREE: Moore might look like this

LOCK UP: Demi Moore just can't resist taking it off. First, she bared her breasts for *Striptease*. Now, to play a Navy SEAL in **Ridley Scott's** *G.I. Jane*, Moore will shave her head. "It's very short hair," says *Jane* screenwriter David Twohy. "Not bald, but it's nebishlike hair." Moore says she insisted on the new 'do: "I'll do anything to make the part realistic." —Cindy Pearlman

ODD MAN IN: Leonardo DiCaprio never met a quirky script (*The Basketball Diaries*, *Total Eclipse*, *The Quick and the Dead*) he didn't like, but quirky and box office

rarely mix. Which is probably why DiCaprio may play the lead in **Jim Cameron's** mega-disaster film, *Titanic* (due from Fox next summer). Even if the actor books passage on the high-seas drama, DiCaprio—who would play a working-class American who falls for a first-class passenger (**Kate Winslet**)—may still take on, well, yet another quirky part, as a porn star in *Boogie Nights*, a gritty portrait of L.A. pornographers in the '70s. —Jeffrey Wells

CAUSE CELEBS: What's in vogue this month? Protests, Hollywood-style. ♦ On May 14, **Paul and Linda McCartney** wrote an open letter to the people of Norway objecting to the hunting of 425 minke whales in the Atlantic, planned to start this month.

Result: "The Norwegian government hasn't responded yet," says Greenpeace's Katrin Brubakk. ♦ In a full-page ad in the May 13 West Coast edition of *The New York Times*, **Tom Cruise**, **Barbra Streisand**, and **Robert Redford**, among others, asked British Columbian lawmakers to support the preservation of Vancouver's Clayoquot Sound Rainforest, which is threatened by clear-cutting. **Result:** Thanks to the ad, logging versus the environment has "become a campaign issue" in the race for premier of the province, says a spokesman for San Francisco-based Clayoquot Rainforest Coalition, which placed the ad. "British Columbia is all aflutter." ♦ Hoping to revoke a license to kill, **Pierce Brosnan**

asked the Minnesota chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation to deny brain-cancer victim Erik Ness, 17, his dream of bagging a bear in Alaska. **Result:** Ness, now in remission, turned down Brosnan's offer of a movie-set visit and is on the hunt. Make-A-Wish organizers still feel wounded. "What people have lost sight of is that this foundation is about children," says a Los Angeles-based Make-A-Wish spokeswoman. "It's not about bears." —Casey Davidson

LOVE, AMERICAN STYLE: After seven years, two children, a few messy breakups, and a malfunctioning gallbladder (which put her in the hospital on Oscar eve), **Robin Wright** wed her pugilistic paramour, **Sean Penn**, on April 27 in a surprise ceremony in L.A. "I just felt like I needed to dive in," says Wright, whose nickname for Penn ("the Loving Nightmare") hints at the couple's roller-coaster relationship. Wright adds that rather than take a break for a honeymoon, the duo will begin working together. In addition to a film version of **David Rabe's** hit play *Hurlyburly*, they will also do *She's De Lovely*, a Miramax film directed by **Nick Cassavetes**. "Our characters are crazy-in-love people," says Wright. "It's typecasting." —CP



ACT TWO: Wright and Penn

tion to a film version of **David Rabe's** hit play *Hurlyburly*, they will also do *She's De Lovely*, a Miramax film directed by **Nick Cassavetes**. "Our characters are crazy-in-love people," says Wright. "It's typecasting." —CP

DISARMED GUARD: All right. He admits it: **Bo Jackson**, the former football star, baseball player, and Nike spokesman, *doesn't* know acting. But now that Jackson just shot his first film, *The Chamber*, based on **John Grisham's** best-seller, he's in training with some of the best. Playing a prison guard opposite **Gene Hackman's** soon-to-be-executed inmate "is like playing baseball with Willie Mays and Babe Ruth," says Jackson. And, just like in professional sports, there's always someone anxious to take on the new guy. "**Chris O'Donnell** kept saying 'I think I could knock you down. Will you let me tackle you?'" laughs Jackson, who figured he ought to oblige. "Finally, I let him punch me around." After all, he notes, "I am a rookie." —CD

A WHALE OF A GOOD PROTEST: McCartney

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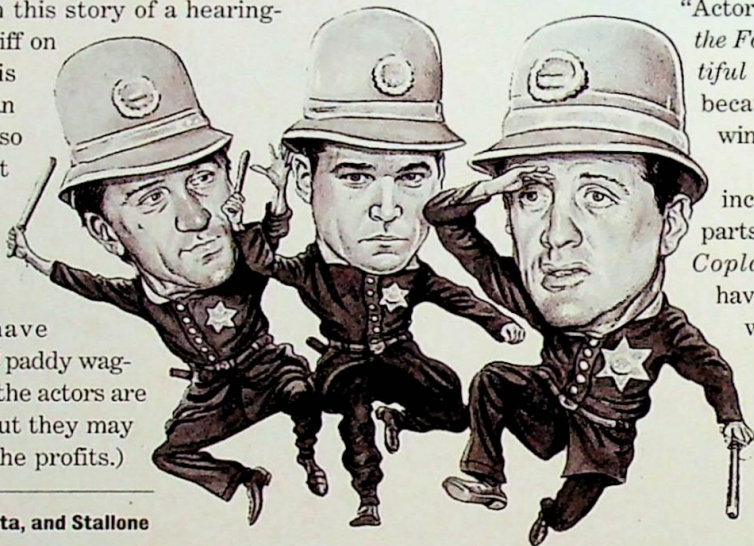
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Working the Police Beat

COPLAND IS SUPPOSED to be **Sylvester Stallone's** *Pulp Fiction*. A small prestige film, it could very well reinvent the action hero's career—a necessity in light of his slip-sliding box office. But the \$10 million Miramax flick, for which Stallone is getting scale wages, isn't as *small* as it used to be.

Now joining Stallone in this story of a hearing-impaired New Jersey sheriff on the trail of corrupt cops is **Robert De Niro**, who'll play an internal-affairs detective also on the hunt. And in recent weeks **Ray Liotta** (who took a smaller role after the lead went to Stallone), **Peter Berg**, **Daniel Stern**, and **Michael Rapaport** have jumped aboard the *Copland* paddy wagon. (Like Stallone, many of the actors are taking major salary cuts, but they may eventually get a share of the profits.)



BLUE MAN GROUP: De Niro, Liotta, and Stallone

De Niro and others cite the gritty screenplay by writer-director **James Mangold** (*Heavy*) as the lure. "It's really smart," says Stern, who'll play Stallone's deputy. But most are signing up for the same reason Stallone did: Trading in a big paycheck for a status part in an ensemble pic is a good way to get noticed by Oscar. "It's a trend," says Meryl Poster, a Miramax senior VP.

"Actors like **Michael J. Fox** in *Blue in the Face* and **Timothy Hutton** in *Beautiful Girls* are taking more chances because they want to spread their wings and change their careers."

With more than 50 roles to fill—including three significant female parts yet to be cast—the makers of *Copland* are confident they won't have too much trouble finding stars willing to wear a badge. "I've been involved in movies where all of a sudden the interest peaks," says *Copland's* producer, Cary Woods, "but I've never seen anything quite like this." —*Tiarra Mukherjee*

M O N I T O R

LAWSUITS **Mel Gibson** may have named his Australian cattle dog Maverick, but at least one person thinks he should've used the title of another one of his films—*Lethal Weapon*. A woman named Terry Adamson filed a complaint for personal injuries and damages against the actor on May 17, claiming that Gibson's unleashed pooch attacked her outside the star's Malibu home in May '95. Gibson had no comment on the biting issue.

EXIT **EXITS** After a decade as the toothsome cohost of *Entertainment Tonight*, **John Tesh**, 43, announced on May 14 that he's leaving the show to pursue his music career full-time. Tesh will be replaced by *ET* correspondent and weekend host Bob Goen.

RECOVERING "Happy Trails" cowgirl **Dale Evans**, 83, from a stroke on May 12. Evans—who starred in 35 movies with husband Roy Rogers, 84—is undergoing physical therapy at

the Loma Linda (Calif.) University Medical Center. "She's doing very well," says Roy Rogers Jr. "She should have a complete recovery."

DEATHS *General Hospital* star **John Beradino**, 79, of cancer, May 19, in L.A. As the fatherly Dr. Steve



TESH



BERADINO

Hardy, Beradino was a mainstay of the long-running soap, having appeared regularly from the first episode in 1963 until his departure last month. "He was *General Hospital*," says Rachel Ames, who played Beradino's on-screen wife, Audrey, for more than 30 years.... Pio-

neering TV sports director **Chet Forte**, 60, of a heart attack, May 18, at his home in San Diego County. In 1970 Forte was a key player in the launch of ABC's *Monday Night Football*, and over the next 17 years he helped turn the telecast into a ratings gold mine. In his 25 years at ABC, he earned 11 Emmys. But Forte also came to know the agony of defeat: In 1990, conceding he had a gambling problem, he pleaded guilty to tax evasion, as well as mail and wire fraud. He later established a second career as a radio host on San Diego's all-sports station, XTRA-AM.... Bluesman **Johnny "Guitar" Watson**, 61, of a heart attack, May 17, in Yokohama, Japan. Watson, revered by axmen from Jimi Hendrix to Eric Clapton, collapsed at a blues bar just as his set began. Watson's 1993 album, *Bow Wow*, was nominated for a Grammy. "He was a master of simplicity," says Al Bell, president of Bellmark Records, Watson's label. "He just poured his emotion and soul into his music." —*Chris Nashawaty*



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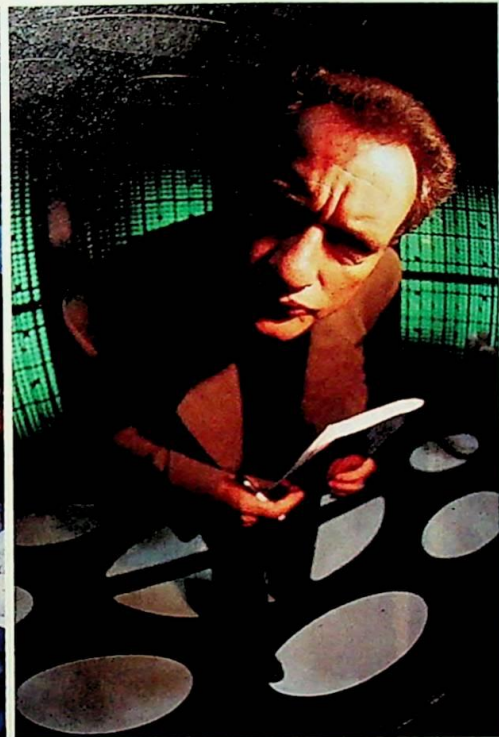
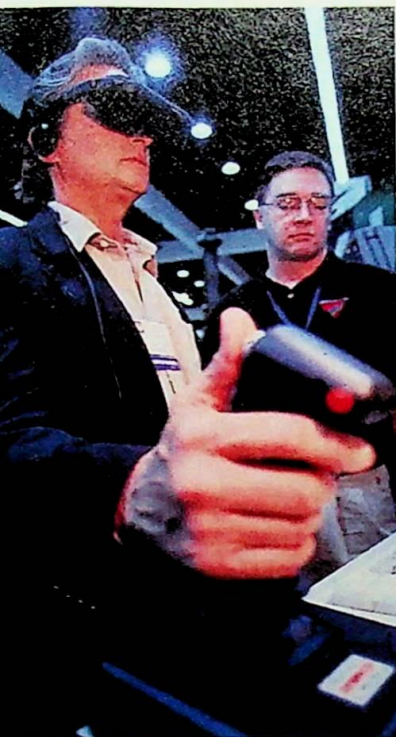
E3 Unconventional Wisdom

At the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the high-tech carnival that lit up L.A., gamers and gadflies saw the future of fun. And it works.

BY TY BURR

ON THE first morning of the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the power in the main convention hall went out. The epilepsy-inducing light shows blinked off, the thunderous backbeat of overloaded speakers fell silent, and millions of dollars' worth of computer equipment went dead. Then, after about 20 seconds, everything roared back to life. ♦ You couldn't ask for a better metaphor for the uncertainty—the fear of being *unplugged*—that lurks beneath the multimedia industry's constant hype. Spread out over several hangar-size halls at the Los Angeles Convention Center, this year's E3, held from May 16 to 18, was a window on the near future, revealing games and technologies that

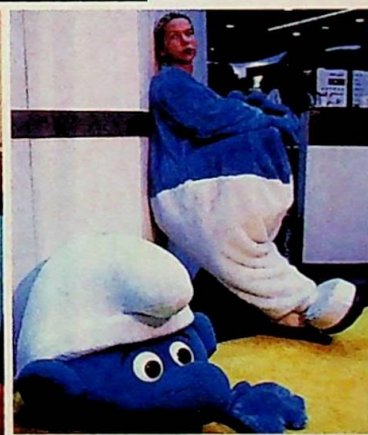
Being
There



could transform our leisure time in the coming months. It was also an earsplitting mosh pit of deal making, celebrities, sound, and vision, all signaling the confusion of an industry still searching for a pot of gold.

Last year at this time, CD-ROMs were white-hot, and the Internet was a beast slouching in the background. But lackluster disc sales and the rise of the World Wide Web have created ripples of panic among the more than 57,000 computer wonks, joystick junkies, and ponytailed Hollywood suits who attend E3. The result: schizophrenia. CD-ROM publishers announced plans to distribute their products exclusively online; computer companies and videogame behemoths introduced cheap Internet/TV hybrids; online services (which make money from subscribers) unveiled their websites (which will be available for free).

Still, E3 showed the multimedia industry trying hard to put on a happy face, with all the lavish partying, surreal exhibits, and bikini-clad booth bunnies that entails. And amid the cacophony, it was possible to discern a few grace notes and bum tunes.



SHOW AND SELL: (Clockwise from far left) Attendees monitor Sony's wares; Michael Douglas enters virtual reality; *Star Trek* stalwart John de Lancie pushes the *Star Trek: Borg* CD-ROM; a tired Smurf loses her head; cheerleaders frolic at Acclaim's booth; a visitor tries out Hendrix licks with the Virtual Pick

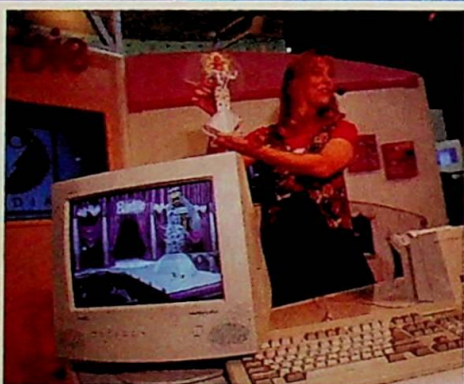
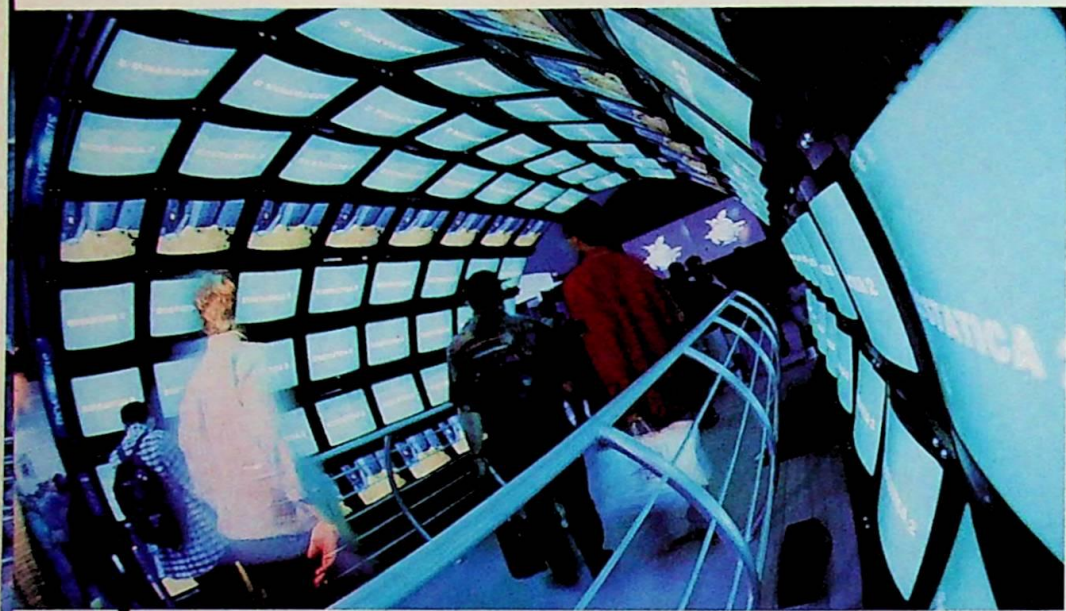
◆ **STAR OF THE SHOW:** *Super Mario 64*. Ready to be scorned by the press, the public, and rivals Sony and Sega, Nintendo's long-delayed 64-bit game system and its debut title instead made converts of them all. With eye-poking graphics, absurdly vivid sound, and creamily smooth controls, *Super Mario 64* redefines the videogame as a compellingly fluid 3-D world. "It's a terrific machine and *Mario* is a great game," opined a Sony spokesperson. That's right, a Sony spokesperson.

◆ **SURLIEST APPEARANCE BY A MAJOR STAR:** Guest **Michael**

Douglas donned Virtual i/O's VR goggles for a brief photo op and even briefer session with the press. The actor's friendship with the company's principals, though, didn't extend to average Expo-goers: When asked a question by a fan as he was leaving, Douglas muttered back, "Just go buy the f---ing thing, okay?"



◆ **BEST SCHOOLYARD SCUFFLE:** The Sony/Sega price war. On the first day of the show, Sony announced a \$100 cut for its PlayStation game system, from \$299 to \$199. Sega brass, caught completely off guard, matched the offer the next day, slashing the price of their Saturn from \$249 to \$199. "It was so tacky,"



be strong, sexy, and intelligent at the same time." Not to mention disemboweled in graphic fashion.

◆ **GAME MOST LIKELY TO PROVOKE FURTHER CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION:** Sega's *Virtua Fighter Kids*, in which animated toddlers kick and punch each other in the face.

◆ **MOST TELLING JUXTAPOSITION:** As **Charlton Heston** extolled the virtues of Jones Digital Century's *Voyage Through the Bible* CD-ROMs (which he hosts), diagonally across the room Sierra On-Line demonstrated *Phantasmagoria 2*, which features vivid footage of a man getting his head blown apart.

◆ **BEST SECRET PURPOSE OF MULTIMEDIA:** To prolong the careers of British humorists from the '70s and '80s. **Eric Idle** promised that other former members of Monty Python would be chipping in material for the soon-to-be-launched website *PythOnLine*: "I haven't got anything from [Terry] Jones, but I'm on to him. I know where he lives." **Douglas Adams**, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the*

said a Sega spokesperson about Sony's ambush announcement. "We're dominating the market and they know it," countered a Sony spokesperson. Neener-neener-neener.

◆ **CLEAREST EVIDENCE OF INTERNET BET COVERING:** Apple Computer and Bandai Digital Entertainment touted their Pippin machine, which delivers the Web to your TV set. Sega announced Net Link, which does the same via a \$199 adapter hooked up to a Saturn game console. In a related trend, at least five companies touted multiplayer game technologies that will allow you to play such shoot-'em-ups as *Doom* over the Net with strangers—and, in the case of Mpath, taunt them through a live audio link. Time to polish up those social skills, gamers.

◆ **MOST EXHAUSTIVE/EXHAUSTING REFERENCE WORK:** Graphix Zone's *Nixon* CD-ROM, which incorporates the full text of the Watergate hearings, the annotated screenplay of the Oliver Stone film, and much more. "Nixon's love letters to Pat?" deadpanned onetime presidential aide **Alexander Butterfield** while checking out the disc, which he narrates. "That could get pretty steamy."

◆ **WEIRDEST EXAMPLE OF FEMALE EMPOWERMENT:** Black Dragon's *Riana Rouge*, an adventure game featuring an oppressed, thong-wearing babe, was created by and stars **Gillian Bonner**, a multimedia producer and *Playboy's* April '96 Playmate. "Part of [the game's] message," Bonner said, "is that you can

TECH NEAT: (Clockwise from top) A TV tunnel leads to the exhibit of game developer Psygnosis; Nintendo 64's new controller and *Super Mario 64* make the leap; the *Barbie Fashion Designer* CD-ROM hits the runway

◆ **MOST FELLINESQUE PUBLICITY STUNT:** We have no idea what the premise of Sega's *Three Dirty Dwarves* is, other than that it involves, yes, three dirty dwarves. But the game company showed inspired desperation when it hired two altitudinally impaired actors to roam around a party it hosted. We asked one of them about the game. His reply? "It's a short story."

◆ **LEAST CONVINCING EXPLANATION FOR THE LACK OF NAME ACTORS IN A LIVE-ACTION CD-ROM:** Said an executive for Cyberdreams, creator of *Dark Seed* and its sequel, "Our games have a lot of unexpected twists and turns, and big actors talk too much."

◆ **BEST FREEBIE:** The whoopee cushion handed out by the makers of the *Animated Voodoo Doll* CD-ROM. As if there weren't already enough wind at E3. ◆ (Additional reporting by **Albert Kim, Ken Neville, and Bob Strauss**)

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Fights

The Sound of MUTINY

Declining ratings and an angry star make this year's Tony Awards Broadway's latest drama.

BY JESS CAGLE

ASK A MEMBER of the fourth estate what he or she loves most and the answer will be a toss-up between (1) a subject who's willing to sound off about something on the record, and (2) fat expense accounts. Which means that right now lunch on the company at Le Cirque with **Julie Andrews** and a tape recorder would be pretty close to nirvana.

Earlier this month, Andrews' Broadway musical *Victor/Victoria* was snubbed by the Tony selection committee, and boy, was she publicly peeved. In front of an eager swarm of reporters after the May 8 matinee performance of *Victor*, Andrews announced she would not accept her Tony nomination for Leading Actress in a Musical—the show's only nod. She has since made it clear that she will not appear on the June 2 CBS awards telecast.

But the decision to decline the nomination—which was, judging from the buzz on Broadway and even among those in the Tony camp, sincere—may have been Andrews' smartest career move since taking off her top in 1981's *S.O.B.* According to Tony Adams, who produced *Victor* with John Scher and Andrews' husband, **Blake Edwards**, the actress has postponed an appearance on *Late Show With David Letterman* and a *New York Times* piece, and turned down a request to be interviewed for this article "to avoid the perception of either grandstanding or, frankly, campaigning," as she still remains a favorite to win (see sidebar). After the awards show, however, she

plans to break her vow of silence. Recently, she was approached by—or had her people approach—several newsmagazine shows, including *20/20* and *Dateline NBC*, where she will presumably get more time to tell the story of the slight as well as plug her show. "We'll do one of the news shows where some footage will be aired and maybe some backstage interviews," says Adams.

With *Victor's* advance ticket sales now soaring like Mary Poppins in a March wind, Andrews seems more like a victor than a victim. Which brings us to the real loser in this Tony to-do: the awards show itself. The annual telecast is usually the classiest of ceremonies, but its minuscule ratings (last year's show



A NOSE FOR NEWS:
Andrews spurns Tony

ranked 43rd) indicate that viewers prefer *America's Funniest Home Videos* to snippets of plays that most of them will never get—or even want—to see. With Andrews a no-show this year, the telecast has even less star wattage than usual.

At the moment, there's but a handful of recognizable TV and movie stars working on Broadway, including **Carol Burnett** (a Tony nominee for *Moon Over Buffalo*) and **Matthew Broderick** (winner of last year's Leading Actor in a Musical Tony for *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*). Broderick will appear as a presenter, and **Nathan Lane** (*The Birdcage*), who's also a nominee for his turn in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, will host. But the telecast's tribute to the Tonys' 50th anniversary, which includes appearances by such past winners as **Liza Minnelli**, **Joan Allen**, **Carol Channing**, and **Harvey Fierstein**, may not have the desired effect. After all, these are giants in the theater world but less prominent on the national stage. Throw in the refusal of *Victor's* producers to lend the show a clip ("They were offering a minute within a medley," says Adams, "and we didn't believe that was the best way to showcase our show"), and CBS will have one less showstopper to keep viewers interested.

"I like to think we're not going to do anything to bore viewers," says Gary Smith, executive producer of this year's telecast. To make sure of it, Smith will feature the Best Musical nominees, giving a national audience a good look at the much-hyped Pulitzer Prize-winning *Rent*, an edgy, hip rock opera based on *La Bohème*, as well as the energetic post-modern tap extravaganza *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*.

Still, the Andrews flap and the Herculean efforts now under way to keep viewers interested have only fueled rumors that CBS will soon dump the perennially low-rated telecast. "The show does not get a rating," admits Joe Cates, who produced it from 1990 to 1992. "Yet it's a prestigious show. CBS gets ad money from companies that have a New York presence." Indeed, Cadillac and AT&T are on board this year, but CBS' Tony contract expires in 1997 (though there are options to renew through 1999) and the failure to deliver stars the size of Andrews is no small loss

BALLOTS OVER BROADWAY

JUST AS Oscar can mean big bucks in video sales and movie tickets, Tony can give a Broadway show legs. So from now until June 2, nominees will be anxiously wondering what the Tony voters are thinking. Shall we second-guess?

◆ **BEST MUSICAL Nominees:** *Bring in 'da Noise, Bring in 'da Funk*; *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*; *Rent*; *Swinging on a Star* **Winner:** A Pulitzer Prize, rapturous reviews, and the death of lyricist-composer Jonathan Larson make *Rent* the sentimental favorite.

◆ **BEST PLAY Nominees:** *Buried Child*; *Master Class*; *Racing Demon*; *Seven*

lo, Dolly!; *The King and I* **Winner:** Although *King* (1951) and *Forum* (1962) both benefit from slick stagings, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *King* is more regal than Sondheim's burlesque.

◆ **LEADING ACTOR IN A PLAY Nominees:** Philip Bosco; George Grizzard; George C. Scott; Martin Shaw **Winner:** Bosco gets credit with Carol Burnett for *Moon Over Buffalo*'s healthy run.

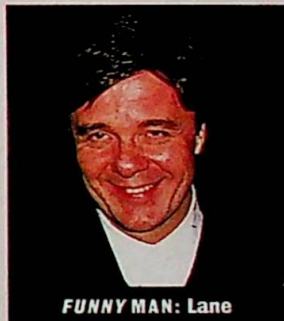
◆ **LEADING ACTOR IN A MUSICAL Nominees:** Savion Glover; Nathan Lane; Adam Pascal; Lou Diamond Phillips **Winner:** Overlooked for *Love! Valour! Compassion!*, Lane will be honored as the funniest thing happening in *Forum*.



BUFFALO GAL: Burnett



PAYMENT DUE: *Rent*



FUNNY MAN: Lane

Guitars **Winner:** *Master Class* has the Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards to prove it has the edge.

◆ **BEST REVIVAL OF A PLAY Nominees:** *A Delicate Balance*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *An Ideal Husband*; *Inherit the Wind* **Winner:** *Balance*, the drama by rediscovered critical darling Edward Albee, is 30 years old but shows no signs of aging—or losing.

◆ **BEST REVIVAL OF A MUSICAL Nominees:** *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*; *Company*; *Hel-*

◆ **LEADING ACTRESS IN A PLAY Nominees:** Carol Burnett; Zoe Caldwell; Rosemary Harris; Elaine Stritch **Winner:** A close call: As a drunk broad in *A Delicate Balance*, Stritch demands your attention, but as Maria Callas, the demanding diva in *Master Class*, Zoe Caldwell can't be ignored.

◆ **LEADING ACTRESS IN A MUSICAL Nominees:** Julie Andrews; Crista Moore; Donna Murphy; Daphne Rubin-Vega **Winner:** Andrews will take the award, whether she wants it or not—Tony voters will snub her snub. —JC

when it comes to wooing advertisers. For now at least, execs insist the show will go on. "CBS is thrilled to again present the Tonys as we have for two decades," said Peter Lund, president and CEO of CBS Inc., in a May 14 statement, adding that "vocal disagreement over the nominations only enhances the theater's vitality."

Meanwhile, executive producer Smith

is striking a conciliatory tone toward Andrews while putting her absence in perspective. "I think she was sincerely hurt by the Tony nominations," says Smith. "But we have a great lineup of people on the show. Yes, there were others I wanted who weren't able to come. I mean, I wish **Angela Lansbury** had been in town." ◆ (Additional reporting by Steve Daly)

BURNETT: ANDREA RENAU; RENT: JOAN MARCUS/CAROL ROSE; LANE: BILL O'NEILL/AMERICA

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It's like John
Travolta.
He came back.
He came back in a
big way.

IT'S NOT AS HARD as you might think to find out what happened to Cher. Here's what to do if you want to learn how she went from triumphant Oscar-winning actress to cheesy infomercial diva to virtual recluse to, she hopes, comeback queen: Fly to Los Angeles, rent a car, drive up the Pacific Coast Highway to the northern end of Malibu, and take a left down to the ocean, make a right, and stop in front of a walled compound. State your name to the voice on the intercom, drive past



Risko



the gate, and walk up to the front door. You'll be ushered into a cavernous foyer and up a flight of stairs.

From a distance, you'll see a smaller-than-you-would-think figure standing in the middle of an enormous bedroom. Candles are burning. The smell of sandalwood incense is overwhelming. Two caged lovebirds are chirping. A collection of silver crucifixes hangs on the wall to the right of the king-size platform bed. The figure is barefoot, dressed in a black T-shirt and leggings. Her hair hangs loosely past her shoulders, and her face looks plastic-surgery smooth and just a little too taut. She walks warily toward you and extends a hand. "Hi," she says. "I'm Cher." She points to a gold crushed-velvet chaise longue. "Sit down," she commands, "and take off your shoes."

It's a good idea to do what Cher says. In her long strange trip from one half of the buckskin-jacketed pop oddity Sonny & Cher to 50-year-old catalog maven, she has really let only one person ever push her around. And she's still a little mad at Sonny, uh, Congressman Bono, for that. After her last major film, *Mermaids*, in 1990, not even the powerful Ron Meyer, her agent at CAA from 1985 until 1995 and now the president of MCA, could persuade her to stick with movies instead of detouring into infomercials. "Most people listen to good sound advice,"



CHER AND CHER ALIKE: (Clockwise from top) Cher with AmFAR auction cohost Taylor in Cannes; her daughter, Chastity; with ex-lover Camille in '87

says Meyer. "And I was very opposed to what she did with her career. But not Cher. She does what she wants to do."

Cher would agree. "I'm really a peaceful person," she says, settling cross-legged in a chair and sucking on a chocolate lollipop. "I'm not mean. But if someone f---s with me, I want to go rip their f---ing throat out."

You could argue, though, that the only person who has messed with Cher in recent years is Cher. Surprisingly, she agrees. She is poised to resurface next month with

an album of mostly male-written tunes, *It's a Man's World*, and recently directed and acted in one segment of a sure-to-be-controversial movie for HBO on abortion, *If These Walls Could Talk*, which will air this fall. She also is planning a greatest-hits album, is about to sign for two new feature films, and can be seen in reruns of the old *Sonny & Cher Comedy Hour* that began this month on Nick at Nite's TV Land.

But this sudden Cher blitz comes after six years during which she virtually disappeared, squandering her hard-won A-list actress status by hawking shampoo and artificial sweeteners on TV and launching Sanctuary, a catalog of Gothic and medieval knickknacks. "The infomercials were just devastating to my career," admits Cher, who says she did them reluctantly as a favor to a friend and was horrified when they be-

came a late-night staple and were spoofed on *Saturday Night Live*. "I'm kind of stupid when it comes to things. I've always just done what I wanted and it's just worked out. Not this time. I really screwed up."

Or did she? The woman who once said she left Sonny Bono for another woman—herself—now says she left Hollywood for the same reason. "It was like I had been playing this person, Cher, for my whole life and I wasn't sure if I was happy being her anymore," she says. "I was cut out for the business as far as the work was concerned, but my feelings get hurt easily. I just couldn't bear to turn on the TV and hear about how many new body parts I had or what young boy I was living with. It wasn't so worth it to be Cher anymore. It wasn't that much fun."

But from the looks of it, being Cher is starting to be fun again. Of course, she refused to promote her most recent movie, the Chazz Palminteri-scripted *Faithful*, which came and went in an instant last month to poor reviews. ("It was horrible," Cher says flatly. "Poor Chazz. I felt sorry for him.") But this month, Cher is suddenly everywhere. She cohosted the AmFAR auction at the Cannes Film Festival [see story on page 28] and at press time was set to headline the AmFAR benefit at the old Studio 54 building in New York City on May 23. And during two long chats in her bedroom over the course of two evenings, fortified by a steady stream of lollipops, bite-size Milky Way Lite bars, and heaping bowls of Häagen-Dazs chocolate sorbet, Cher said she was grateful for what she called her "sabbatical" from show business and optimistic about her return. "People forget I've been away and come back before," she says. "It's like John Travolta. When I come back, I come back in a big way."

JUST BEFORE RUSHING out to vote on the floor of the House of Representatives, Sonny Bono is explaining why he thinks Cher's career went south just as his political fortunes were rising. "Cher's never been a real secure person," he says. "She's a magnificent talent, but complicated. When you find yourself working opposite Nicholson and Sarandon, you better have a lot of confidence. And I'm not sure Cher did. I think she hedged her bets with the infomercials. She grew up so poor that her big concern was to always be okay financially. I question whether she was totally confident in the movie industry."

If Bono were in Cher's luxurious bedroom right now, she'd probably deck him for saying that. Although the two don't talk anymore, they share a love/hate relationship that endures even without communication. They've regularly dissed each other

over the years, and Cher is still bitter about what she calls Sonny's "endless controlling and womanizing." (The worst moment, she says, came one night when she got up to get a drink of water and found Sonny having sex with another woman in the living room.) But Cher admits she'd be "devastated" if anything ever happened to Sonny, now married to his fourth wife and the father of two young children. Sonny says he never had "that magic" with anyone else but Cher. Their daughter, Chastity, 27, now a gay-rights activist, says that whenever she visits one parent, "they always ask how the other one is doing."

Cher says the two "could meet tomorrow and know what the other one is thinking," but thinks Bono is wrong about what happened to her career. Unlike other over-40 actresses in Hollywood, Cher says she never really worried about her age or her ability and still got offered plenty of parts. But she was wounded by run-ins with directors; she and Peter Bogdanovich

clashed so badly making *Mask* that she says she was hysterical throughout the shoot. She fought with the first two directors on *Mermaids*, Lasse Hallström and Frank Oz, who were eventually replaced by Richard Benjamin. Partly because of her bad experiences, she turned down Kathleen Turner's role in *The War of the Roses*, Susan Sarandon's in *Thelma & Louise*, and the part Charles Grodin eventually played in *Midnight Run*. "I felt she should have taken those movies," says Ron Meyer,

who remains a close friend. "But she didn't care what I said. She's extraordinarily stubborn."

Stubborn—but also weary. After making seven movies between 1981 and 1990 (*Come Back to the Five & Dime Jimmy Dean*, *Jimmy Dean*; *Silkwood*; *Mask*; *The Witches of Eastwick*; *Suspect*; *Moonstruck*, for which she won a Best Actress Oscar in 1988; and *Mermaids*), "I just got tired," she says, spooning down some sorbet and stroking her leopard print rug with her bare toes. "You forget, I've been working since I was 16. That's 34 years. I got up every morning at the crack of dawn and I never took vacations. It was all about my career."

Cher's tumble off the Hollywood grid coincided with a series of crises in her personal life. She developed chronic-fatigue syndrome and says she was so tired she had to sit down in the shower to shampoo her hair. Her relationship with the man she calls the love of her life, actor Rob Camilletti, now 32, cracked under the strain of the paparazzi and tabloid stories. "I was thrilled when Alec Baldwin got off" after being charged with assaulting a photographer, she says. "These people try to provoke you. They say horrible things to your face to get a reaction."

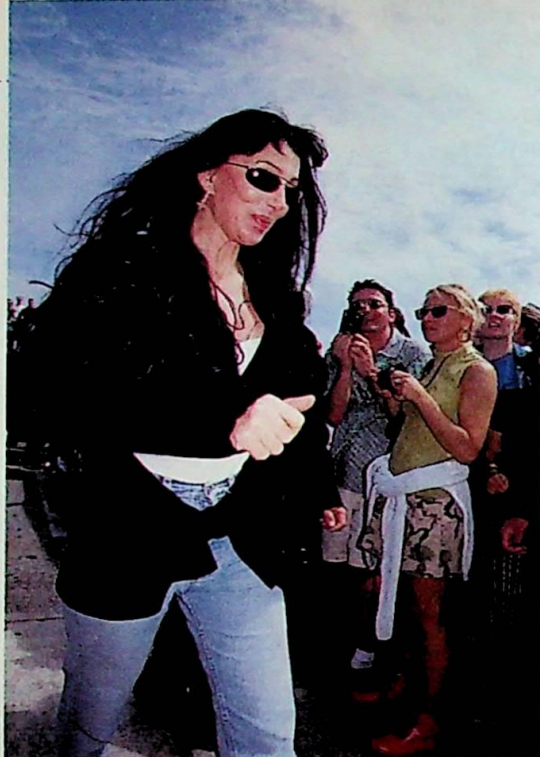
I'd rather talk
to a bag woman
at the super-
market
than a lot of people
in Hollywood

A "reaction," Cher-style, is what Chastity Bono got right about the time she told her mother she was a lesbian. "I freaked out, told her to get out, and cried for a week," recalls Cher. "I felt angry and guilty." The two reconciled within days but then had to deal with the *National Enquirer's* outing Chastity. One of Cher's publicists fixed Chastity up with male dates to lessen suspicion, but it didn't work. Finally Cher herself urged Chastity to come out. "It really got to be too much," says Cher. "The price you pay for being good at what you do is having no privacy and having people say horrendous things about you and not being able to have relationships and the people that you love getting hurt by everything that's written."

Most of her recent troubles are over. Cher says she was cured of chronic fatigue when she found a doctor who prescribed a regimen of holistic remedies—herbs, acupuncture, and oxygen therapy. Camilletti, with whom she still goes flying occasionally, remains a good friend, as do most of her exes; she sees David Geffen regularly and is on good terms with former husband Gregg Allman, father of her son, Elijah, now 19 and finishing his first album in Vancouver. And after butting heads with Chastity's first girlfriend, Cher says she "adores" her daughter's current lover, an office manager named Laura LaMastro who lives with Chastity in San Francisco. Cher calls LaMastro her "son-in-law," and the two recently celebrated their birthdays together with Chastity and the rest of the family in Malibu.

But all is far from serene with Cher. She still bristles at the plastic surgery rumors. The only time she loses her cool during the interview is when she is asked directly if she's had extensive work done. "I don't mean to be rude, but that's a stupid question," she says. "It's ridiculous that people think I've had implants in my cheeks and in my chin and my ribs removed. I mean, I've had the same cheekbones since I was little. And I have my ribs, all of them. I actually came forward and said I had my nose done, I had my breasts done, and I had my teeth done. Obviously, it's not a good thing to tell the truth."

WHILE SHE TOOK a respite from telling the truth, or talking much to anybody, for that matter, Cher was mainly holed up in Malibu. Except for a brief fling with Bon Jovi's Richie Sambora and affairs with singer-songwriter Mark Hudson and an Englishman whom she won't name, her love life has been uncharacteristically stagnant. She denies rumors that she's been seeing Matt Dillon. "I've never been a big one for hanging out with industry people," she says. "I'd rather talk to a bag woman at the supermarket than a lot of people in Hollywood. You forget what makes all those people powerful. You get to



CANNES SHE GET THERE FROM HERE? Cher's comeback bid picked up some steam on the sunny Riviera this month

the top by killing the competition."

Cher began to plot her return slowly. She moved to London to record *It's a Man's World* and "had a blast singing again." She returned to California, however, when the British press printed the address of her apartment on the Thames. From her base in Malibu, she supervised the construction of a new home in Florida, but the paparazzi discovered the location, so she plans to sell it and build another one on an isolated island off Florida. In between reading new scripts, she has decorated both homes with many of the *Caligula*-meets-*The Munsters* tchotchkes to be found in Sanctuary, the catalog-sales company she began in 1994. (Cher won't disclose sales figures but says it's breaking even in its second year.) Chain-mail helmet candlestands, black-angel incense holders, wrought-iron wall sconces, sultana

pillows, heavy fringed-velvet drapes, and leather camel figurines crowd the interior of the Malibu house she shares with her sister, Georganne, her brother-in-law, and a household staff, including her cook, Andy.

From time to time, she interrupts the interview to check on the editing of her segment of *If These Walls Could Talk*, which is being spliced together in an office across the hallway. The movie is about three women (Demi Moore, Sissy Spacek, and Anne Heche) in three different eras—the '50s, '70s, and '90s—who must deal with unplanned pregnancies. Cher directed and also appears in the smaller role of a doctor in the contemporary segment. "I must say I don't think I've ever felt quite so excited about my work as I've felt about this," she says. (Cher, who has had two abortions, says she is "firmly pro-choice but not pro-abortion.") "I was just so excited to be directing. I felt like a kid waking up on Christmas morning. I hope I can do more directing."

The same woman who says she "could give a s--- what Hollywood thinks of me," is prone to rabid name-, or rather, *nick-name*-dropping. In conversation, she casually refers to Michi (as in Pfeiffer), Nonie (as in Ryder), Nicky (as in Cage), Sue (as in Sarandon), and Johnny (as in Travolta). "Part of my mother is very much the insider," says Chastity. "The other part is the outsider. But I never worry about her. She's a survivor and a fighter. Whatever she wants to do, she'll find a way to do it."

And for now, it appears, Cher wants to be Cher again. "I've missed my work so much," she says. "When I'm not out, people aren't so interested in finding out about me and I can just be who I am. But it's such a gift to be able to perform. It's impossible to stay away." And she'll challenge anyone who says she can't come back. "In our business," says Cher, "it's not over until the fat lady sings."

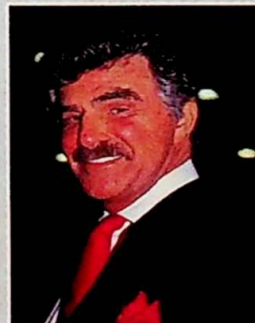
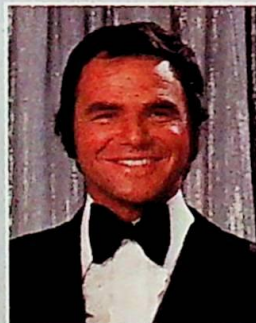
In other words, the beat goes on. ♦

Oblivion Postponed

Are you a fading '70s star who'd like to make more money? Sure you are! Like Cher, you can escape "Where Are They Now?" status by following EW's simple guide to reclaiming fame. Are you listening, Joyce DeWitt? Mark Hamill? Captain? Tennille?



SEE PACIFIC BELL DIRECTORY FOR TARANTINO, QUENTIN. The director, with his love of '70s cheese, gave John Travolta back his cool by casting him as Vincent the hitman in *Pulp Fiction*. Now, with a price tag of \$20 million per film, the former has-been will never be a have-not again.



WORK ON YOUR FOREHAND: What came between *Pretty Baby* sensation Brooke Shields' low-rent TV movies and her own NBC series, *Suddenly Susan*, coming this fall? Andre Agassi. Duh.

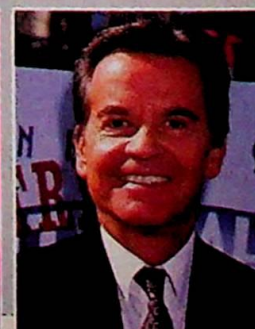
PRETEND TO DIE: Adam Rich, 28, the mop-topped kiddie star of *Eight Is Enough* and one-time resident of the Betty Ford Center, allowed the satirical upstart *Might*, a San Francisco-based magazine, to announce his early demise—by a gunshot wound—in a feature spoof of dead-celebrity tributes.



REFUSE TO DIE: Don Rickles served his time in the Las Vegas lounge scene and earned a supporting role in *Casino*, the honor of voicing Mr. Potato Head in *Toy Story*, and, most recently, a deal as the "paid spokesman" for Comedy Central.



REFUSE TO DIE AND FILL YOUR BOOTS WITH VASELINE: Test audiences for this summer's *Striptease* were so enthralled with Burt Reynolds, who plays a slippery



congressman with a slippery-foot fetish, that the ending was reshot to keep him likable. Now he's getting better buzz than Demi Moore's breasts.

DIE: Take note of the current *I Shot Andy Warhol* and the upcoming biopic of the late designer Halston. You too can rise again!

WEAR A SUPPORT BRA: Three words—Mary Tyler Moore. Her uplifting scene in *Flirting With Disaster* proves that her comedic talents are still firm.

WHEN IN DOUBT, RETREAD: Aging rockers Kiss are again donning their attention-getting greasepaint and platform boots. Note: Eight-inch tongue required.

ADD TWO PARTS NOSTALGIA, ONE PART KITSCH FACTOR; STIR: In heavy rotation on VH1, *American Bandstand* reruns have been embraced once again by boomers reliving their bell-bottom-wearing, groovy-dancing glory

days. Also in *Bandstand's* favor: Host Dorian Gray, uh, Dick Clark, asking ABBA about "Kraut rock"; and the turtle-neck-wearing Travolta singing his 1976 ballad "Let Her In."

APPLY FOR A SPOT ON NICK-ELODEON: Expect *The Odd Couple* mugs and T-shirts this fall, when the show joins the Nick at Nite cable roster. And given the inclusion of *The White Shadow* on Nick at Nite's TV Land lineup, how hard can it be to get on? Go ask Alice. —Kristen Baldwin

BACK TO WHERE THEY ONCE BELONGED: (From top) Travolta and Reynolds prove there is life after '70s stardom—and there's no stopping Kiss, Rich, and *Bandstand*

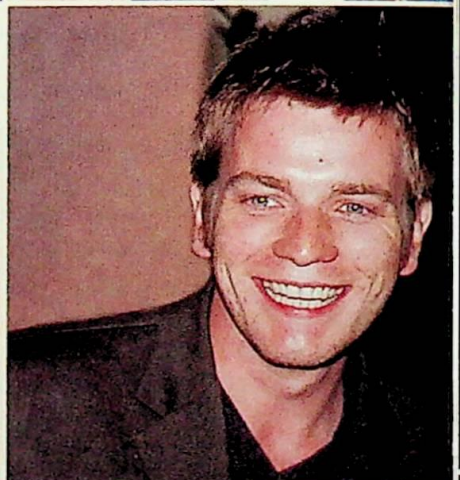
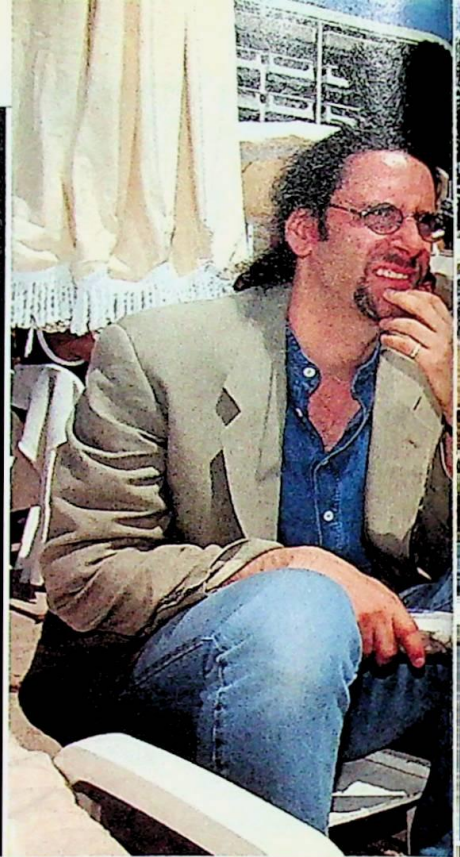
CatchasCatch CANNES

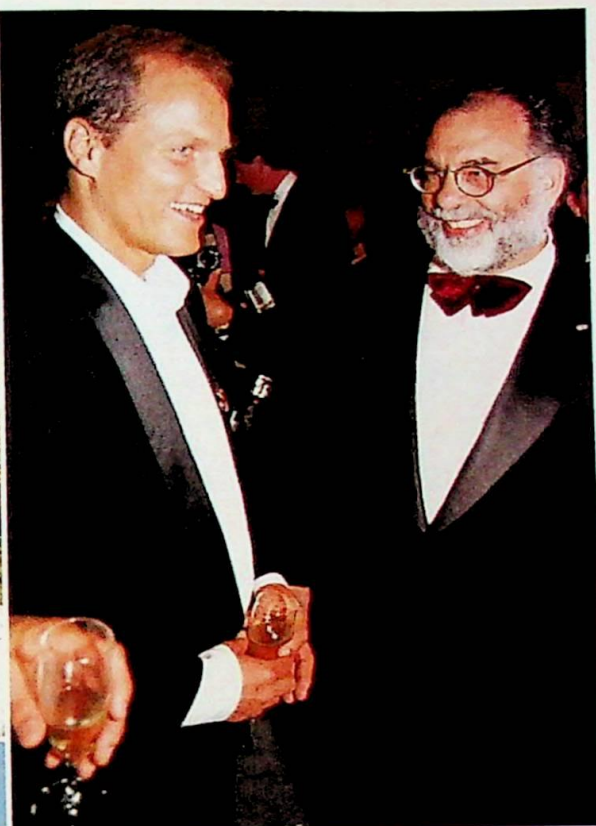
Liz, Liv, 'Crash,'
and naked men
give a kick to
France's fest in
the fast lane



"I COULD...MAKE YOU understood all over the world," says Scottish star Ewan McGregor to Taiwanese actress Vivian Wu in *The Pillow Book*, directed by Englishman Peter Greenaway. And just as McGregor and Wu lovingly apply calligraphy to each other's bodies in the kinkily sumptuous polyglot epic, the overriding theme of the 49th International Festival of Film at Cannes was getting naked—via words, sex, and emotion—and getting noticed for it. Which isn't difficult on the Riviera in May with the whole film world watching. ♦ While press wags dubbed the *Pillow* director "Penis" Greenaway, it was David Cronenberg's *Crash* that caused the biggest fuss, as it was designed to do. A sex-filled story of damaged souls who live for car smashups and coitus, *Crash* was booed at its debut on May 17. But three days later, to further boos and greater shock, it won a special

BY ANNE THOMPSON





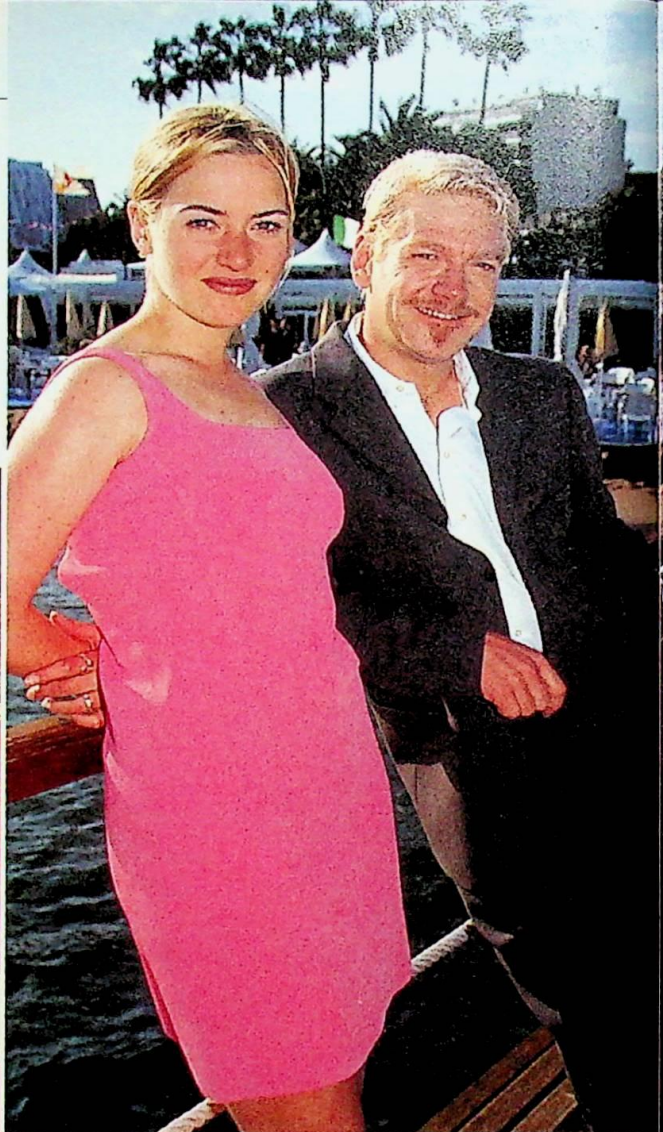
MAKING THE FEST OF IT

(Clockwise from top) *Lone Star* director JOHN SAYLES (center) lounges with winning *Fargo* director JOEL COEN and Coen star (and wife) FRANCES McDORMAND; *Sunchaser*'s WOODY HARRELSON with jury prez FRANCIS COPPOLA; *Crash* survivors HOLLY HUNTER, JAMES SPADER, and ROSANNA ARQUETTE; *Bastard* director ANJELICA HUSTON; LIZ TAYLOR, with a handful of *Sugar*; great Scot EWAN MCGREGOR, whose runaway Brit hit *Trainspotting* was the cool Cannes sideshow

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
LARRY LASZLO/COMEDIA

BEACHED BLONDS

(Below) Surrounded by what Liv Tyler dubbed the "papanazis," **TONY CURTIS** escaped his Houdini past and did an appearing act with statuesque girlfriend **JILL VANDEN BERG**; (right) it was bold and blond meets beautiful when **KENNETH BRANAGH** and Jude's **KATE WINSLET** hit the deck to promote his no-holds-Bard version of *Hamlet*, in which the Oscar-nominated actress plays Ophelia



jury prize for "originality, daring, and audacity," to the delight of U.S. distributor Fine Line. "It was a risk to put *Crash* in the festival," says marketing chief Liz Manne. "But the fact it's a balls-to-the-wall film is its marketing appeal."

Sure to earn an NC-17, *Crash* shows plenty of Holly Hunter, Rosanna Arquette, and James Spader, who bucked a trend among male actors at Cannes by not appearing fully, frontally nude. "It had to do with geography," Spader insisted. "Most of the scenes were f---ing. You don't see the penis."

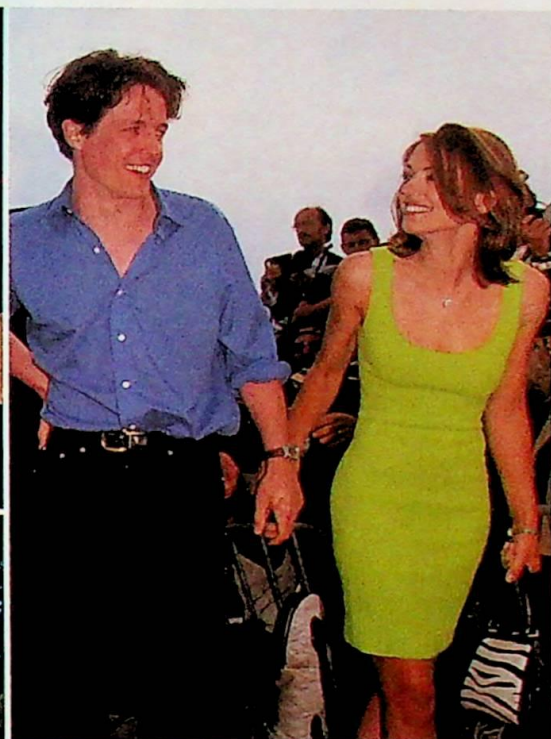
Naked grabs for attention didn't taint the festival's other, largely European prizewinners—Mike Leigh's *Secrets and Lies* (Palme d'Or), Lars von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* (the runner-up Grand Prix), *Fargo*'s Joel Coen (best director), *Secrets*' Brenda Blethyn (best actress), and *The Eighth Day* leads Daniel Auteuil and Pascal Duquenne (who shared best actor honors). Francis Coppola's nine-member jury chose between two emotional entries for the top prize (both set for fall release here by October Films). *Breaking* tells the story of an innocent who commits adultery at her paralyzed husband's behest; in *Secrets*, Blethyn plays a white woman who discovers that the grown-up daughter she never saw after her birth is half black. "The film is about what we all want and need to do," said Leigh, "find who we are and what we are."

Strong movies with few stars left the 4,000 credentialed mem-

bers of the press scrambling for access to the hot names. There was *Temptress Moon*'s Gong Li—a ranking goddess of Cannes since *Farewell My Concubine* shared the Palme d'Or two years ago—in the company of Monaco's Prince Albert, and *Stealing Beauty*'s azure-eyed nymphet Liv Tyler charming a legion of photogs she nicknamed "papanazis." There was Sandra Bullock and Chris O'Donnell touting *In Love and War*, a movie they haven't even shot, and a 10-minute preview of Madonna's musical *Evita* that screened not for sensation's sake but "to reassure my distributors their investment was safe," explained Cinergi's Andy Vajna, who could use a hit after *The Scarlet Letter*.

If Tyler (dubbed Liv Taylor by the French) was Cannes' reigning poster girl, *Pillow Book*'s McGregor was its boy. Riding high as one of the stars of *Trainspotting*—the most talked-about film in Great Britain this year and a surprise to many for not being admitted in the festival competition—he was on ample display in *Pillow*. "It was f---ing freezing," recalled the actor, who hadn't seen the film before the festival. McGregor moved from *Pillow* to *Trainspotting*, a paean to heroin, to the fully frocked *Emma* in a matter of months. "That was weird, standing outside my trailer in a wig, top hat, and tails."

This year, the highest-impact stars came from rock, not Hollywood. Mick Jagger, Chrissie Hynde, Oasis, and Blur attended the *Trainspotting* bash. Eric Clapton, who scored Stephen



LARGER THAN LIFE

(From top left) Director **MIKE LEIGH** with **MARIANNE JEAN-BAPTISTE** and **BRENDA BLETHYN**, the stars of his Palme d'Or-winning *Secrets and Lies*; crowds trailed **HUGH GRANT** and **ELIZABETH HURLEY**, the trailer-toting producers of *Extreme Measures*; *Stealing Beauty* **LIV TYLER** was plastered all over town

Frears' noisy buddy comedy *The Van*, dropped in, as did Queen's Brian May, who wrote music for Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*. Elton John and his date wore matching Versace earrings to the AmFAR Cinema Against AIDS benefit (partly sponsored by EW) at the three-star restaurant Les Moulins de Mougins, where hostess Elizabeth Taylor and guest Leonardo DiCaprio were both hobbling: Taylor is recovering from hip surgery, and DiCaprio, as he told Woody Harrelson, "jumped up really high in the air and snapped my ankle."

Them's the breaks at Cannes. Some of the most touted films—including Robert Altman's self-styled jazz riff *Kansas City*, Chen Kaige's theatrical soap opera *Temptress Moon*, and Frears' *The Van*—will need to recover from critical disapproval. But rock sprig Tyler was already hip to Eurohype. "Every time I see [*Beauty's* poster], I start laughing uncontrollably," she confessed. "You know this is not happening to me in America."

At least *Stealing Beauty* opens June 12, even if it will be competing with the likes of *Twister* and *Mission: Impossible*. At festival's end, although *Pillow Book* was well received, it still lacked a U.S. distributor.

"A lot of festival buzz is bull," says Gramercy president Russell Schwartz, who lost French festival faves *Microcosmos*, which stars real bugs, and the costume comedy *Ridicule* to Miramax. Instead, Gramercy is backing sweet crowd-pleaser *The Eighth Day*, whose prizewinning star Duquenne has Down syndrome.

"Cannes has been a good place for me," insisted five-time festivalgoer Jennifer Jason Leigh, who was there in support of Altman's *Kansas City* and rookie director Anjelica Huston's literally hard-hitting child-abuse drama *Bastard Out of Carolina*. "I got Georgia and Dorothy Parker financed here. Cannes appreciates movies that might not get appreciated other places."

A case in point is *Bastard*, which ex-Cannes juror Huston was inspired to direct after starring in what she teasingly terms "that pipsqueak" director Sean Penn's *The Crossing Guard*. Festival director Gilles Jacob picked her film to show out of competition after Ted Turner's TNT refused to air it uncut. "Very seldom in one's life do you have moments like that," she recalled two days after her rousing festival reception. "It was eye-wateringly good." ♦

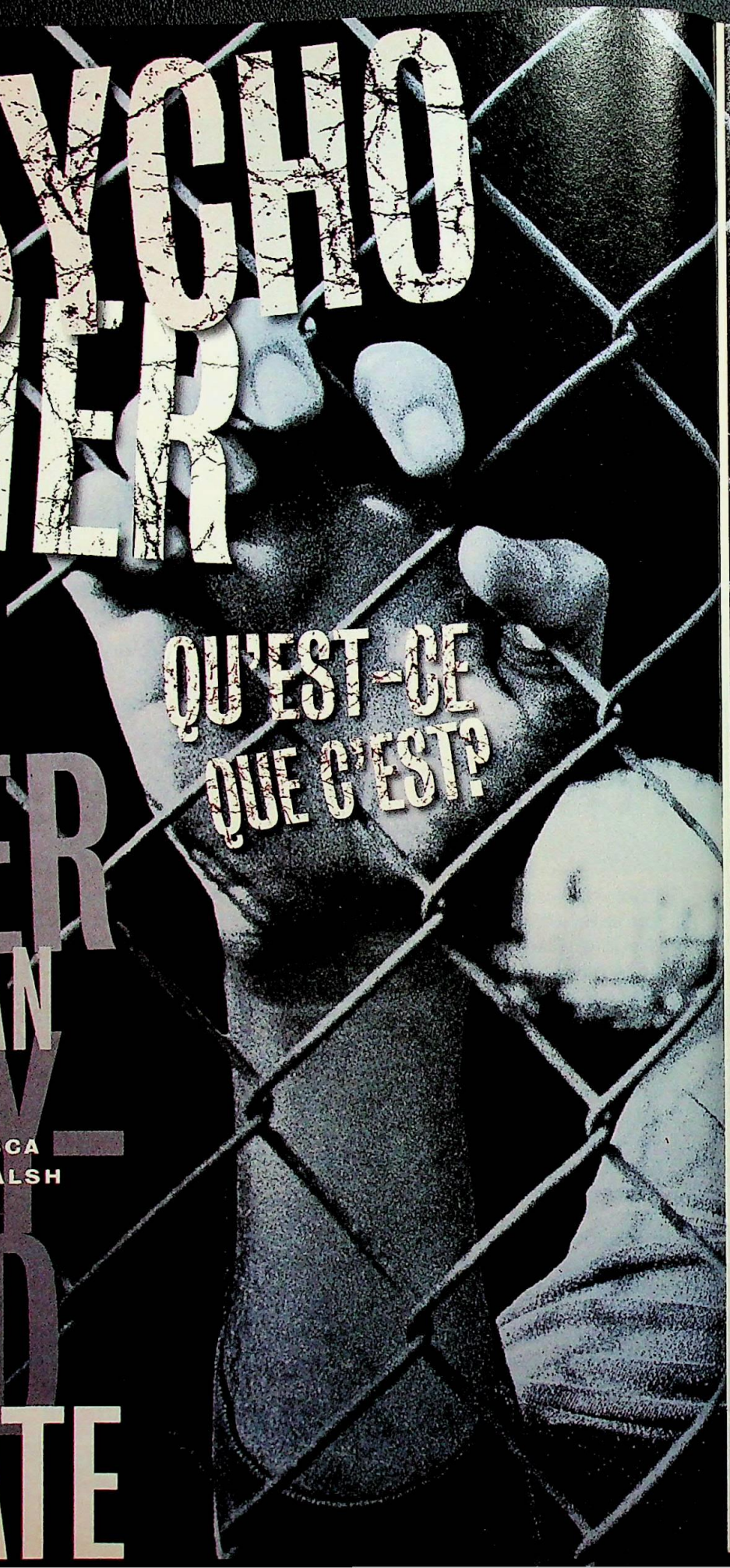


PSYCHO KILMER

WHY
VAL
KILMER
IS THE MAN
HOLLY-
WOOD
LOVES TO HATE

QU'EST-CE
QUE C'EST?

BY REBECCA
ASCHER-WALSH





THE ARREST WAS ALREADY

five-day-old news when the fax arrived in the mail rooms of entertainment executives across L.A. The headline—FBI

DETAINS SUSPECT IN UNABOMBER HUNT—offered no forward spin. But those who received the transmission, sent by a high-powered friend, were in on the joke: In place of the photograph of a glowering Theodore Kaczynski was the smiling, suntanned, sunglasses-wearing Val Kilmer. ♦ When it was announced last February that Kilmer, 36, would not return as the Caped Crusader in *Batman and Robin*, the forthcoming fourth installment of Hollywood's billion-dollar-plus movie franchise, the utter lack of public distress on the part of Warner Bros. was a sure sign that something had gone amiss for Kilmer. Since first coming to attention in the comedy *Top Secret!* (1984), the actor had solidified his reputation as a versatile leading man playing parts like Jim Morrison in *The Doors* (1991) and Doc Holliday in *Tombstone* (1993).

Then, last summer, he had proved his commercial viability in the \$184 million-grossing *Batman Forever*, spinning that success into four other projects: the cop thriller *Heat*, this August's *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, this fall's turn-of-the-century African adventure *The Ghost and the Darkness* with Michael Douglas, and a now-filming remake of the 1960s television series *The Saint* with Elisabeth Shue.

But just as Kilmer's \$6 million-per-picture paycheck has come to reflect his clout, his reputation for being difficult has soared. His prolific schedule notwithstanding, many in Hollywood are loath to work with him, no matter how big the box office payback.

It's no special feat to be voted Mr. Unpopularity in an industry that seems to create a new contender every month, but it's virtually unheard-of for the griping to become public. Nonetheless, here are the testimonials from some of Kilmer's recent colleagues: As Richard Stanley, who directed Kilmer for three days in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* before being fired, recalls, "Val would arrive, and an argument would happen." Says John Frankenheimer, who replaced Stanley: "I don't like Val Kilmer, I don't like his work ethic, and I don't want to be associated with him ever again." And *Batman Forever* director Joel Schumacher calls his onetime star "childish and impossible."

Kilmer, who declined to be interviewed for this article, has had a tumultuous year: Last July, he separated from his wife of seven years, actress Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, with whom he has two children, Mercedes, 4, and Jack, 1 (he's since taken up with Cindy Crawford), and has been working nonstop in locations as varied as Australia, South Africa, and Russia. But even that stress, say those who know him, cannot excuse incidents like the time he burned a cameraman with a cigarette while filming *Moreau*. Some suggest that Kilmer's behavior hasn't gotten worse; it's just that more people are paying attention.

KILMER'S BROTHER, Mark, 37, thinks Kilmer's troubles are unsurprising. "We all have grandiose, narcissistic tendencies," says Mark, a doctoral student of psychology who has not spoken to his brother since their father's funeral in 1993. "If there are people helping those tendencies along, it's hard to resist."



Kilmer, who grew up in the San Fernando Valley and attended Juilliard, has always come with a "Handle with care" sign. Although *Tombstone* producer James Jacks says, "He behaved well on my movie, and I'd be happy to work with him again," Kilmer's reputation for volatility preceded him, and at times, the star seemed to play up to it. *Tombstone*'s first director, Kevin Jarre, who was fired after a month of shooting, says, "There's a dark side to Val that I don't feel comfortable talking about," but offers this anecdote. One day on the set, he and Kilmer "were deep in conversation about Doc Holliday, and this stand-in brought over a very colorful sort of locust and said, 'Look what I found!' I looked up and said, 'Hey, that's pretty good,' and Val, without saying a word, grabbed the locust from the guy and ate it. And it was big. He



MOREAU: PETER SORIEL; CRAWFORD AND KILMER: GEORGE DEKEERLEIS/STYMA; BATMAN FOREVER: RALPH NELSON; KILL ME AGAIN: HOLLANDRETHA

said to me, 'As you know, I have a reputation for being difficult. But only with stupid people.'

Or with people who don't share his opinion. Oliver Stone, who had no complaints about Kilmer's behavior on the *Doors* set, acknowledges that the actor "is passionate about his work—with the wrong approach, you may see a side of him you don't like." That side can be violent: An executive on *The Real McCoy* (1993), a bank-heist flop in which Kilmer starred with Kim Basinger, says Kilmer became so enraged when director Russell Mulcahy declined to alter a scene to his specifications that he fired his prop gun at a prop car.

When Kilmer signed to do *Batman Forever* two years ago, Schumacher braced himself. "I had heard horror stories about

Val and was warned not to hire him," he says. "But I have heard that about many talented people, hired them anyway, and had no problems whatsoever."

This time, Schumacher was less fortunate. After a couple of weeks of shooting, Kilmer's behavior had eroded to the point where Schumacher says he and Kilmer "had a physical pushing

match. He was being irrational and ballistic with the first AD, the cameraman, the costume people. He was badly behaved, he was rude and inappropriate. I was forced to tell him that this would not be tolerated for one more second. Then we had two weeks where he did not speak to me, but it was bliss." As for Kilmer's absence from *Batman and Robin*, which starts shooting this August, "he sort of quit, we sort of fired him," says Schumacher. "It probably depends on who's telling the story."

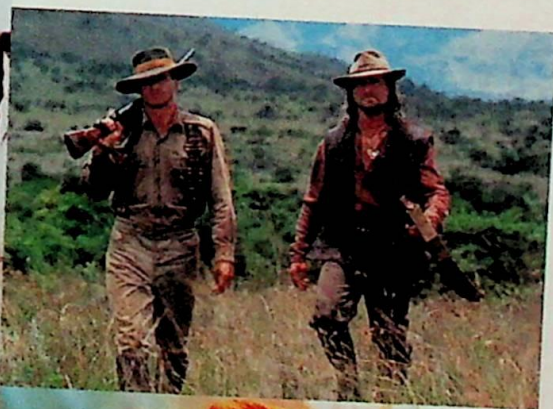
In fact, says a Warner Bros. insider, Kilmer's contract required him to make a second *Bat*-film; when Kilmer announced that he would be making *The Saint* for Paramount until mid-July, leaving only days to prepare for *Batman and Robin*, Warner Bros. reminded Paramount that Kilmer was due on *Batman* Aug. 1. "They went insane," says the source, "and said they'd make *The Saint* without Val. Suddenly Val says, 'Then I won't do *Batman*,' thinking we'd say, 'Oh, come a month later.'" Instead, Warner Bros. kept its start date, released Kilmer from his contract, and handed the Batsuit to George Clooney.

VAL KILMER LIKES to make trouble. With a strong director, he performs. In the absence of one, he can become a liability, as he proved last fall on the set of *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, the New Line sci-fi jungle adventure whose tormented production became an apotheosis of all that is absurd about Hollywood.

Director Richard Stanley spent four years developing what would become the story of a marooned lawyer who discovers an island inhabited by a mad scientist (played by Marlon Brando), his assistant, Montgomery, and their terrifying "humanimal" creations. New Line agreed to fund the project with Kilmer on board in the starring role, but then the actor began to waffle about spending so much time on camera. "Val's opening gambit was to reduce the lead by 40 percent," says Stanley. "My initial note to him, which started the relationship off badly was, 'No, we can't reduce the role—you're crazy.' So I came up with a way to save my own ass. I was the stupid idiot who suggested he play Montgomery." Eager to mollify a star who, post-*Batman*, could sell tickets, New Line agreed and gave the leading role to Rob Morrow. "New Line's point of view was, Val was the money," says Stanley, "and if it came down to being between me and Val..."

It took only three days. Last summer, Morrow, Kilmer, and the *Moreau* crew headed down to Queensland, Australia, with Brando planning to follow them. The first day, with the script still being rewritten, Kilmer and the humanimals, played by actors in costumes, set out to the sea on a storm-swept morning. "He'd do [the lines] but he'd throw it all away," says Stanley. "And he kept insisting on odd bits and pieces of his wardrobe that didn't make sense, like a piece of blue material wrapped around his arm. It was like, 'Why is that around his arm, and will he take it off?'" According to an actor on the set, the lines Kilmer recited were "lines written for other characters, in other scenes."

On the second day, when Kilmer didn't show up until 3 p.m.,



TOIL AND TROUBLE

(Clockwise from top left) Kilmer and Thewlis on the *Moreau* set; strolling with Crawford; with Douglas in *Darkness*; glamming it up with Nicole Kidman in *Batman Forever*; and with Whalley-Kilmer in 1989's *Kill Me Again*

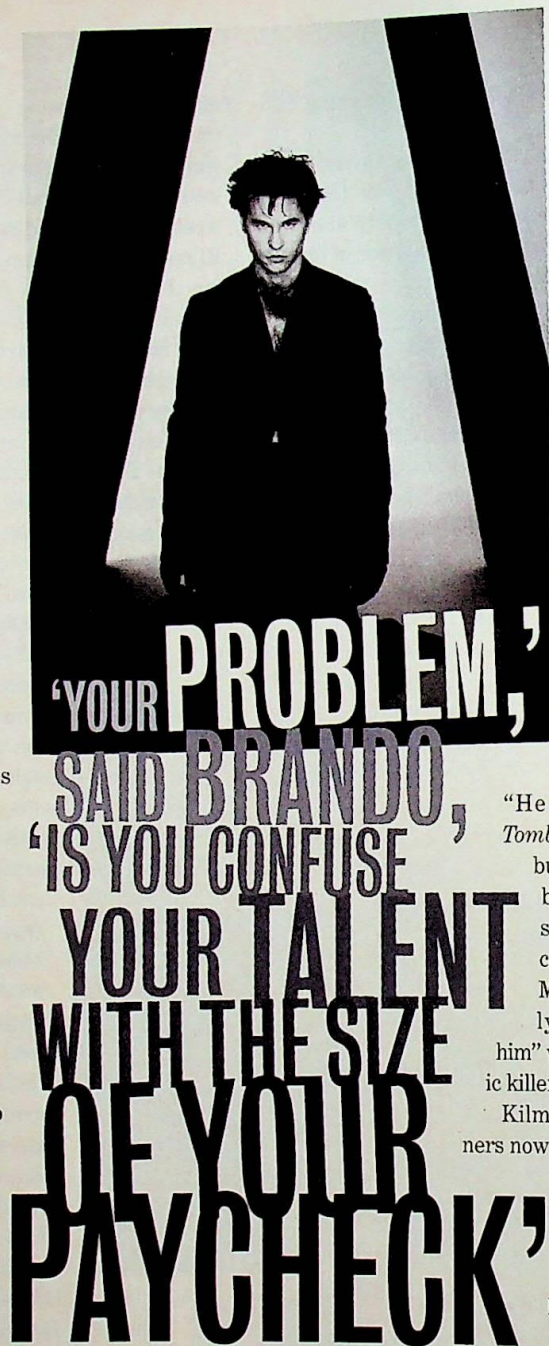
Stanley still wasn't worried. "An agent at CAA," which represents both the director and Kilmer, "told me not to worry, that every Val movie loses the first two days." But on the fourth day, after seeing the dailies that Stanley had shipped to L.A., New Line fired the director. Stanley believes that Kilmer influenced New Line's decision: "He would refuse to rehearse. He's clever; because then we'd just shoot it, and the moment you shoot it, it's rushes, and it goes back to the company." Michael DeLuca, New Line's president of production and development, says, "I didn't give [Kilmer] a strong director. And that was my fault."

New Line stopped production, and brought in director John Frankenheimer; Morrow, who wouldn't comment, fled the set and was replaced by David Thewlis (whose character was completely rewritten). "By the time Brando arrived, the script had collapsed," says Stanley. "No one was willing to say no to anything, which is why Brando wears an ice bucket on his head in one scene." (Brando did not respond to a request for an interview.)

Frankenheimer and Kilmer were a combustible match as well. One evening, Kilmer turned to the director and asked, "You know what I think?" To which Frankenheimer responded, "I don't give a f---. Get off my set." Brando made Kilmer feel equally unwelcome, moving his trailer away from the young actor's and one-upping him in delays. "Between Kilmer and Brando, we didn't shoot for 12 days, with all the crew just standing around," says a member of the production team, who adds that one day, when Kilmer was in Brando's trailer, Brando told him, "Your problem is, you confuse your talent with the size of your paycheck."

Nor did Kilmer earn any fans when the lit end of his cigarette met the face of a camera operator. "Val was sort of teasing him with the end of his cigarette and burned this guy's sideburn," says *Moreau* executive producer Tim Zinnemann. "The guy was upset, naturally." But one who witnessed the incident has a different opinion: "He burned that cameraman right on his face, and no, he wasn't fooling around. It was intentional. He did apologize to the crew."

Frankenheimer and Kilmer were united on one point: the fear that Stanley would return to the set and burn it down. (Stanley says this was based simply on a joking comment he made to the production designer.) What they didn't realize is that Stanley had been there all along—with the help of the



makeup and costume people, he'd returned as a humanimal extra. "I decided to come back as a melting bulldog," says Stanley. "I didn't know Frankenheimer or the assistant directors, so they didn't recognize me. I couldn't have come that far and not seen Brando." At Brando's wrap party, "I took the dog mask off and showed who I was. Kilmer came up and hugged and kissed me and said how sorry he was."

Frankenheimer says simply, "Will Rogers never met Val Kilmer."

SOME OF KILMER'S colleagues offer measured praise for the actor.

"He was very generous," says *Tombstone*'s Jarre. "I asked Val to build up this actor's confidence before a scene. The actor was sweating, he needed it, and Val came through." *Heat*'s Michael Mann says he "had an absolutely terrific time dealing with him" when Kilmer played a psychotic killer: "He worked his ass off."

Kilmer may be minding his manners now that he's lost the *Batman* gig.

As Stanley points out, "He doesn't have the power he once had, or thought he had. He's had to fold his tent and play it a bit more carefully."

"Relations with Val on *The Saint* I can only describe as

peachy," says director Phillip Noyce. "Sweet and ripe and all that." Echoes producer David Brown, "Val has been a complete gentleman. He's given us extra days he's not required to do by contract. He's been very adaptable." But, Brown acknowledges, "most artists require someone who will listen to them—you'd better listen to a serious actor, and Val is a serious actor."

As for whether Kilmer is serious trouble, not everyone agrees. With "too much money and too many people blowing smoke up his ass," says Zinnemann, "it's like giving an 8-year-old a machine gun and saying 'Don't fire it.'" Jarre agrees. "Maybe there's a Jekyll-and-Hyde thing going on with him inside. Maybe he's like those children who test the limits and if parents don't stand up to them, they just become monsters." Or movie stars. ♦ (Additional reporting by Judy Brennan, Anne Thompson, and Jeffrey Wells)



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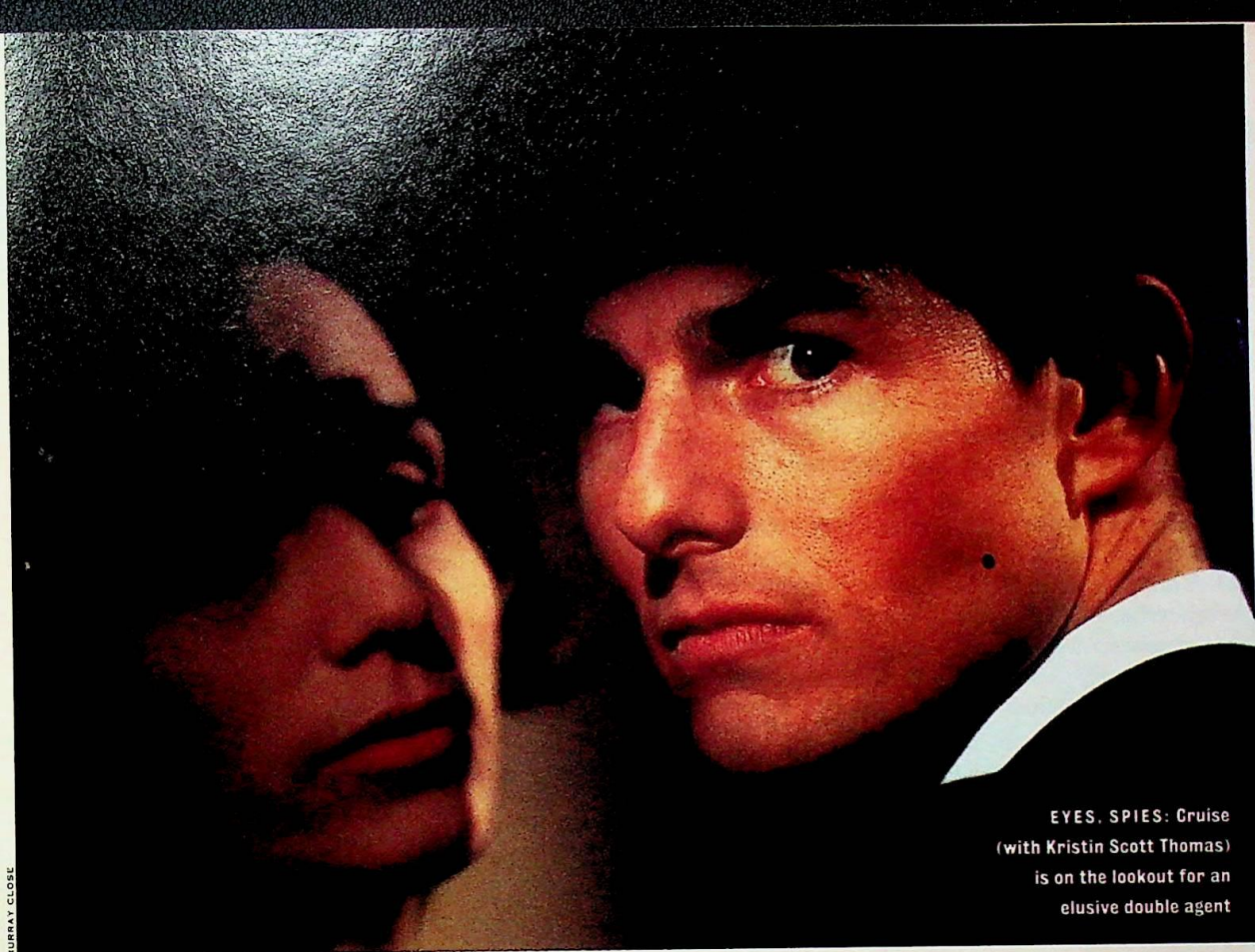


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EYES, SPIES: Cruise
(with Kristin Scott Thomas)
is on the lookout for an
elusive double agent

Choose to Accept It

Tom Cruise leads a team of outlaw agents on a convoluted caper in *'Mission: Impossible,'* a made-from-TV thriller that grabs you—when you can follow it. **BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN**

WHEN WE FIRST hear the famously synco-pated theme music, it's literally a blast from the past. Jacked up in Dolby, accompanied by a fast-forward montage that's like a trailer played at warp speed, the jagged eight-note signature motif of **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE** (*Paramount, PG-13*) sounds more propulsive and alive than ever—it revives our memories of the TV series and then some. Happily, we sit back, thinking that if the rest of the picture can retrofit our nostalgia this suavely, we're in for a heady couple of hours. But *Mission: Impossible*, it turns out, isn't a movie of simple pop

pleasures. Directed by the veteran trickster Brian De Palma, from a script by David Koepp and Robert Towne, it's a movie of profoundly convoluted pop pleasures. Between dazzling suspense sequences, it invites the audience to work for a good time.

The original show, which ran on CBS from 1966 to 1973, offered a new blend of espionage and paranoid-surreal fancy. Each week, a team of U.S. undercover operatives, led by dour Peter Graves (who looked as if his hair had been white since birth), executed a top-secret operation with tight-lipped bureaucratic aplomb. If their demeanor was strictly business, however, their covert activities, which ranged from the most elaborate sort of electronic slicing and dicing (Greg

Morris' Barney, the team's technology whiz, might have been the ur-hacker) to going undercover in skintight latex masks, were like a secret agent's sci-fi version of an illusionist's variety show. It was the knowing, poker-paced preposterousness of *Mission: Impossible*—this team of Cold War drones bending reality with a fun-house mirror—that lent the series its hip, ironic edge.

The film starts out like one of those old, beloved episodes, with veteran IMF agent Jim Phelps (Jon Voight) receiving his instructions via videocassette—something about apprehending a Russian agent who plans to steal a disc and use it to reveal the identities of American agents stationed in Europe. Phelps assembles his usual team, draws up his usu-

al master plan, and assigns a pivotal role to his ace protégé, Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise). But just as the team goes into action, the filmmakers pull the rug—and the floor—out from under us.

With the Cold War ancient history, the new *Mission: Impossible* updates super-spy hanky-panky to the Aldrich Ames era, locating the enemy inside the IMF. And the story line, as well, turns in on itself. *Mission: Impossible* is structured as a Rubik's Cube that keeps on twisting. It's about setups within setups, and though most of it makes sense on paper, I doubt I'll be alone in confessing that I wasn't always clear as to how, exactly, the mysterious IMF mole connects to the mysterious arms dealer, or to the sinister IMF chief (Henry Czerny), or to the incongruous double murder by the gate... (And is there some reason Vanessa Redgrave plays an underground mastermind like the madam of a West End brothel?) The problem isn't that the plot is too complicated; it's that each detail is given the exact same nagging emphasis. Intriguing yet mechanistic, jammed with action yet as talky and dense as a physics seminar, the studiously labyrinthine *Mission: Impossible* grabs your attention without quite tickling your imagination.

Halfway through, Cruise assembles a new spy team of former agents who've been "disavowed." With these renegades up and ready, De Palma finally unleashes a great sequence. The agents have to break into a computer room where they'll set off an alarm if they make a sound or touch the floor. As Cruise dangles from the ceiling in antiseptic silence, the surroundings so sterile white they could be something out of *2001*, De Palma, a wizard of crosscutting, gets us giggly with tension. Cruise plunges to within inches of the floor, and the actor's balletic urgency is palpable—we're on that crazed trapeze right along with him. Later, in the amazing climax, De Palma places Cruise atop a train traveling at such throttling speed that the fact that it's dragging a helicopter seems almost an afterthought.

In sequences like these, *Mission: Impossible* plunges us thrillingly into the moment. But the rest of the film unfolds at a slight dramatic remove. Cruise's spy team includes the bald, molasses-voiced Ving Rhames (Marsellus Wallace in *Pulp*

Fiction) and the cocky Jean Reno (from *The Professional*), charismatic actors who haven't been given nearly enough to do. With Cruise front and center, *Mission: Impossible* comes close to being a de facto James Bond thriller, yet without the romance of Bond. Cruise, winning as he can be, is too boyish for the hardened superagent he's supposed to be playing. As the "love interest," Emmanuelle Béart, in a role that seems to have been left on the cutting-room floor, is upstaged by her own lips. For all its trickery and bravura, *Mission: Impossible* remains a quizzical, impersonal toy. When it's over, and the Rubik's Cube finally does line up, we're left with the odd sensation that, distracting as the picture may have been, there never was very much to it. **B**

Secret Service Without a Smile

Leslie Nielsen searches for missing laughs in 'Spy Hard'

QUICK, WHAT DO the following scenes have in common? Arnold Schwarzenegger riding a horse through a hotel lobby in *True Lies*; Whoopi Goldberg leading a chorus of nuns in an R&B number in *Sister Act*; the "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" bicycle ride in *Butch*

Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; the John Travolta-Uma Thurman dance number in *Pulp Fiction*; Jim Carrey's eyes popping in *The Mask*; James Bond flirting with Moneypenny. Answer: All these scenes were wittier, sassier, *funnier* in their original form than they are being "parodied" in **SPY HARD** (*Hollywood*, PG-13), a grab-bag spoof that takes the flaky *MAD*-magazine-meets-the Information Age style first popularized by *Airplane!* 16 years ago to a listlessly un inventive new low. The creators of that style, Zucker, Abrahams, and Zucker, made sport of the schlock-movie clichés you didn't even know were there; their imitators just pound you with clichés.

Spy Hard is a loose send-up of the Bond series and other overly expensive action flicks, but after *Hot Shots! Part Deux* and *National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1* who needs another action parody? These movies offer the depressing spectacle of "satirical" mayhem, which, too often, is indistinguishable from the real thing. What the jokers behind the camera fail to understand any better than Bob Dole does is that action movies already are comedies; audiences aren't recoiling from the violence and sadism—they're cheering it, with a giggle. I'm happy to report, though, that even a dud like *Spy Hard* can't completely douse the stumbling Zen charm of Leslie Nielsen, whose genius is that he never quite sheds the illusion that he isn't in on the joke. He just keeps going, like the Energizer Bunny of twinkly self-ridicule. **C-** —OG



THE SAME OLD NUNSENSE: Nicollette Sheridan falls victim to Nielsen's habitual spoof shtick

IF A COW FALLS IN A FOREST...

A head scratcher's guide to a blockbuster that might be better if it only had a brain

Q **UESTION:** Can a pickup truck barrel through a house unscathed? Answer: It's only a movie. Question: Can a person sense a tornado by sifting a handful of dirt? Answer: It's only a movie. Question: Would a cow really moo while airborne? Answer: Signs point to yes.

Sifting through the dozens of questions raised by *Twister's* highly unstable mix of dense scientific fact and sci-fi-fueled hot air, we've set aside

most of the improbabilities the movie leaves flapping in the breeze (five tornadoes in one day!) and the little imponderables littering the landscape (Why don't we see Dusty smoking a joint?) in favor of chasing down the truth about the really important issues in the year's first blockbuster.

1. What happened to the tractor tire flying toward us in the trailer? The preview's gasp-inducing final shot was part of a test sequence created by Industrial Light & Magic in 1994, before the *Twister* script was even completed. Since it "didn't have the high quality of effects now in the movie," says ILM's Dennis Muren, it didn't make the final cut.

2. How close can you get to a tornado before being sucked in? Not very, says Harold Brooks, meteorologist at the National Severe Storms Laboratory in Norman, Okla. Even "keeping a vehicle straight when winds are 70 miles per hour is a nontrivial issue," he adds. As for riding out tornadoes rated F5—winds start at 261 mph.

3. Would cows really moo while in a tornado's grip? "I don't think she'd have a contented moo," says Dr. Harry James, a veterinarian in Pond Creek, Okla., "but cows, when they're scared, have an agonizing, shrill, exclamatory type of thing."

4. Does a tornado growl like a caged beast? Brooks: "That was something of a surprise to me."

5. When Jo's dad is whisked out of the storm cellar, how come Jo and her mom aren't too? "They were further underground," notes Brooks, who adds, "If he would just have sat [on the ground] in the cellar, everything would be fine."

6. Can those little sensor balls really be "too light" to fly and in need of Pepsi-can beanies? "Of course not," scoffs University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Dr. Howard

Bluestein. "Cloud droplets are extremely light, and they fly."

7. Is anything in *Twister* too heavy to fly? Let's see, Helen Hunt plus Bill Paxton is 300 lbs., give or take. A Holstein, about 1,100 lbs. The Dodge Ram pickup, 4,200 lbs. A two-story house: 340,000 lbs. "An F5 tornado can lift a house," Bluestein observes.

8. Does everyone in Wakita drink Pepsi? "Wakita drinks nothing but Coke," attests Wakita Foodland owner Cleta Hulsey.



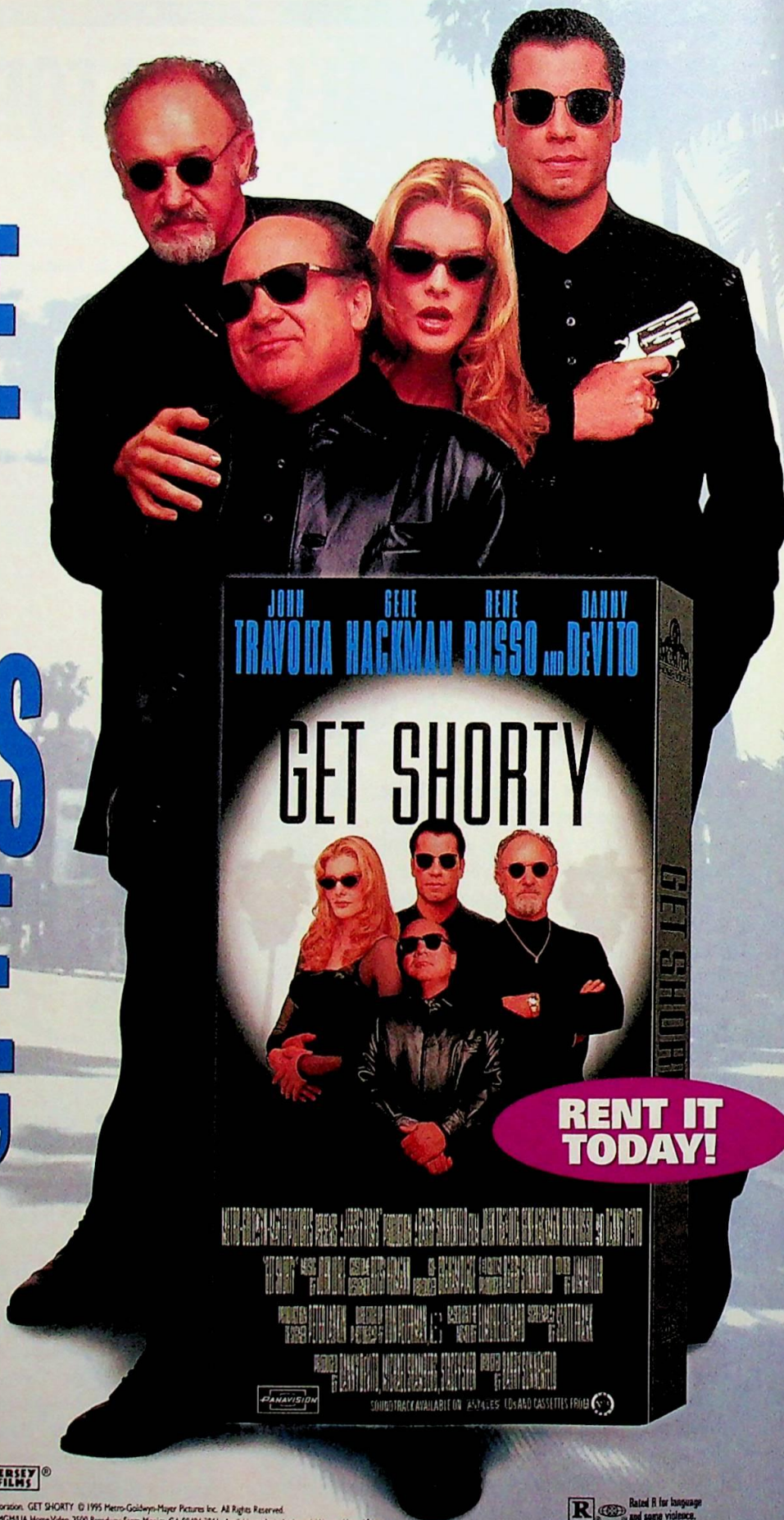
"I sell eight times as much Coke as I do Pepsi."

9. Where do you get those white tank tops that both women competing for Bill Paxton wear? In nearby Enid, where Wakita residents shop, Doris Posey, ladies' wear manager at Wal-Mart, says, "What I did get in are already gone."

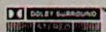
10. Why didn't Aunt Meg's cooking kill the chasers? Their meal of steak, fried eggs, mashed potatoes, gravy, and biscuits amounts to 746 mg of cholesterol—more than twice the recommended daily intake—and 1,377 calories, nutritionist Elisabeth P. Sonoff reports. "These people will need a very lean diet for the next few days to make up for lunch." —Dave Karger, Marlene McCampbell, Richard Natale, and Erin Richter

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R Rated R for language and some violence.



Original Angster

'Dollhouse' relives junior-high humor and heartache

HEATHER MATARAZZO is the bravest actress I have ever seen. Let stars already secure as glamour-pusses demonstrate how bold they can be by working without lipstick. In **WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE** (Sony Pictures Classics, R), Todd Solondz's wonderfully funny-shading-into-brutal Sundance Film Festival Grand Jury Prize winner about adolescent hell, Matarazzo maintains spectacular poise while playing Dawn Wiener, a miserably unpopular, dorky, nearsighted seventh grader. Dawn is called "ugly," "lesbo," and "Wienerdog" by her classmates, and she's ignored by her clueless family in contemporary suburban New Jersey. Yet Matarazzo—costumed in geeky eyeglasses and a tragically uncool wardrobe that does no favors to her pre-teen body—withstood the scripted taunts while enduring the real insecurities of being a regular 11-year-old girl, discovered by the filmmaker at a New Jersey mall.

It's a scientific fact that humans are never crueler to one another than during the junior high school years. If your seventh-grade graduate's fists don't clench in anxious empathy during the movie's opening scene as Dawn carries her awful tray full of barfy food into the hideous school cafeteria filled with hor-

rible schoolmates, desperately searching for a safe place to sit, then you were educated by home schooling. *Dollhouse* focuses on Dawn's attempts to survive, simply survive: Her older brother is a nerd obsessed with compiling a college-worthy school record; her doted-on younger sister is a simpering, manipulative ballerina wannabe; her only friend is a runty neighbor boy the other kids call a "faggot"; a school bully threatens to rape her; and she's got a paralyzing crush on an unworthy heartthrob who sings in her brother's terrible garage band.

But Solondz also creates keen portraits of the participating characters in Dawn's daily drama. (The only downside: The drama veers unsteadily toward outlandishness.) In particular, the affectless violence of Brandon the bully (Brendan Sexton Jr., another acting novice), stripped away, reveals just another scared kid trying to survive his own miserable home life. Dawn's brother (Matthew Faber, from *The Pallbearer*), talentlessly honking away on his clarinet, opens a window into the special misery of teenage boys. And did I mention that *Dollhouse* is smartly comic? I have a feeling that Dawn Wiener—and Heather Matarazzo—will one day soon bloom into talented and beautiful young women. When they do, I hope they can also write movies as sharp as this one. **A-** —*Lisa Schwarzbaum*

OUTSIDER LOOKING INWARD: Matarazzo reflects the pain of those gawky wonder years

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THE WEEK

Reviews by OWEN GLEIBERMAN, LISA SCHWARZBAUM, and KEN TUCKER

NEW RELEASES

HEAVEN'S PRISONERS (New Line, R) Alec Baldwin does a fabulous job of sweating through all his shirts in the steamy *Heaven's Prisoners*. Playing Dave Robicheaux, the New Orleans-based, recovering alcoholic ex-cop from James Lee Burke's fine detective novel series, Baldwin renders the AA-abiding Dave's booze temptations with subtlety. And he makes a sharp guide through the kudzu-thick plot: Dave and his wife (Kelly Lynch) suspect skulduggery behind a plane crash near their home; a thug, played by that nice young man Eric Roberts (his hair in cornrows, his lines delivered in a menacing gurgle), may or may not be trying to kill the couple. Add the Mob and Mary Stuart Masterson, as a broken-fingered stripper, and it's a story that director Phil Joanou has difficulty keeping in motion. *Lois and Clark's* Teri Hatcher, as Roberts' wife, makes an au naturel entrance guaranteed to give her Internet-downloading fans a collective heart attack. *Pris-*



IS THAT TERI CLOTH? Hatcher sheds her Lois Lane image in *Prisoners*

oners has mildewed on the shelf since December 1994; it's slow, but not unsatisfying. **B** —KT

NELLY AND MONSIEUR ARNAUD (Artificial Eye, unrated) The gravely lovely Emmanuelle Béart, who played a breathtaking cellist in Claude Sautet's meditative *Un Coeur en Hiver* (and who makes her American debut in the unmediated *Mission: Impossible*), plays a breathtaking typist in this equally contemplative little Sautet production. (He won a César—the French Oscar—for each.) And once again,

his themes are intimacy, repression, and what's at risk when one soul reaches out to another. This time, the attractive people doing the talking instead of doing (voilà for fans of *Seinfeld* and French cinema—another film about *rien!*) are Nelly (Béart), a directionless young woman divorcing her stick-in-the-mud husband, and Monsieur Arnaud (the wonderful Michel Serrault, the drag queen in the original *La Cage aux Folles*), a wealthy older gent who hires her to type up his memoirs. Not much happens: She has an affair with his editor; he pines for

her with courtly hopelessness—the end. But the little currents of desire that ruffle the smooth surface of this Parisian love story sneak up on you while you're dreamily coveting Arnaud's daily cognac at his local bistro. **B+** —LS

IN THEATERS

COLD COMFORT FARM (PG) A cheeky adaptation of Stella Gibbons' darkly funny 1932 novel about an unflappable London girl called Flora (Kate Beckinsale) and her eccentric relatives who populate a decrepit farm. Director John Schlesinger has created a perfect, burnished little world, and the delectable cast has a great time with Malcolm Bradbury's zingy script. Look for *Ab Fab's* Joanna Lumley as Flora's chic London mentor; Eileen Atkins as her morbid tarot-reading aunt; Ian McKellen as her uncle, a fire-and-brimstone preacher; and dishy Rufus Sewell as her cousin, who ruts around in haystacks and dreams of a career in the movies. He gets one, too, in this BBC gem. **A** (#327, May 17) —LS

THE CRAFT (R) *Carrie* meets early John Hughes. There's nothing very "witchy" about the four high school girls who form a coven here, and that's what makes the movie rather appealing. As the most spiteful of the four, Fairuza Balk suggests a Molly Ringwald who grew up with riot grrrls as role models. **B-** (#326, May 10) —OG

DEAD MAN (R) The latest from writer-director Jim Jarmusch is a picaresque art Western, with Johnny Depp as a half-turned-outlaw roaming a landscape of smirky, violent absurdism. *Dead Man* fancies itself a mystical poem of mortality—Depp seems to be staring at a mirage of his own afterlife—yet the film's meandering quirkiness is, finally, a bore. **C-** (#327, May 17) —OG

FLIPPER (PG) One reason this movie is better than the old 1964-68 TV show: Fine young actor Elijah Wood plays the dolphin's friend Sandy Ricks instead of wooden young TV actor Luke Halpin. One reason it's *worse*: Bland, mannered Paul "Crocodile Dundee" Hogan is in the adult role of Porter Ricks, instead of television's wonderfully grumpy Brian Kelly. Flipper, Sandy, and Porter discover that a bad guy (Jonathan Banks) is dumping toxic waste into the local waters. It's up to our heroes to get the villain. Featuring a law officer played by Isaac Hayes, *Flipper* was written and directed with sunburned lassitude by Alan Shapiro. **C** (#328, May 24) —KT

CRITICAL MASS

Here's how a sampling of critics and movie audiences from across the country grade 10 current releases.

	CINEMASCOPE Audiences across the U.S.	ROGER EBERT Starlet & Ebert	GENE SISEL Starlet & Ebert	JAMI BERNARD Knight-Ridder Syndicate	CARRIE RICKEY Knight-Ridder Syndicate	MIKE CLARK USA Today	ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	AVERAGE*
COLD COMFORT FARM (Gramercy)	—	B+	B+	B	B+	A-	A	B+
THE CRAFT (Columbia)	—	C+	D	—	C-	C-	B-	C
DEAD MAN (Miramax)	—	C-	B-	D	B+	D	C-	C
FLIPPER (Universal)	A-	C-	C	C+	C	D+	C	C
HEAVEN'S PRISONERS (New Line)	B-	C-	C	C	—	C	B	C
I SHOT ANDY WARHOL (Orion)	—	B	B+	B+	A-	B+	A	B+
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE (Paramount)	—	—	—	B-	B	B	B	B
NELLY AND MONSIEUR ARNAUD (Artificial Eye)	—	—	—	—	—	B+	B+	B+
ORIGINAL GANGSTAS (Orion)	—	—	—	—	C+	C	B+	B-
TWISTER (Warner Bros.)	A-	C	C+	A-	C+	B+	B	B-

*Average does not include CinemaScore.

MODEL YOUTH OF THE WEEK

Such Polite Boys



Since the MPAA allows only one "sexually derived expletive" in a PG-13 film, Lukas Haas and others dubbed lines in *Boys*, with varying results. Post-looping, a high schooler who breaks his hand now angrily screams, "Thank you!" No, thank you!

MANGLED YOUT OF THE WEEK

Elijah Wood

When it comes to spelling, *Flipper* gets the hook. Some prefabricated misspelled lead Elijah Wood's name. King Display, the New York City company that made the signs for Universal, claims the *h* fell off. At every theater? Sounds fishy.

THE GREAT WHITE HYPE (R) Fast, furious, and pummelingly funny. Samuel L. Jackson plays a Don King-clone promoter who manages heavyweight champ James "the Grim Reaper" Roper (Damon Wayans) and looks for a white fighter to challenge him. Director Reginald Hudlin swirls the movie's pace into a froth of taunts, jabs, and satire. **B+** (#326, May 10) —KT

I SHOT ANDY WARHOL (R) Director Mary Harron has had the inspired audacity to tell the story of Valerie Solanas, who wrote the *SCUM* (Society for Cutting Up Men) *Manifesto* and on June 3, 1968, pumped three bullets into Andy Warhol. Lili

Taylor, looking like an angry squirrel, plays Valerie as a woman in weirdly rational thrall to her own demons. Harron takes us inside the Factory as if it were a playroom for spoiled children, with Warhol (Jared Harris) as its cooing, wallflower Oz. **A** (#325, May 3) —OG

JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH (PG) An enchanting animated adaptation of Roald Dahl's 1961 classic. Unfortunately, it's framed by crude live-action scenes that douse the spell. **B** (#323, April 19) —OG

ORIGINAL GANGSTAS (R) A trio of '70s blaxploitation stars—Fred Williamson, Jim Brown, and Pam Grier—star in this contemporary shoot-'em-up with a conscience. They play middle-agers in a crime-ridden area who are tired of being bullied by local gang-bangers. *OG* works as an action flick but also as an effective lament for a lost generation of inner-city African-American youth. **B+** (#328, May 24) —KT

THE QUEST (PG-13) Directed by Jean-Claude Van Damme, it opens with dawdling subplots that then lead to the Lost City of Tibet, where we're treated to...a martial-arts tournament that has nothing to do with anything that's gone on before. **D** (#326, May 10) —OG

THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS & DOGS (PG-13) Janeane Garofalo blossoms into a romantic star as Abby, a talk-radio host haunted by the fact that she doesn't turn heads. When a caller (Ben Chaplin) asks her out, she recruits her gorgeous neighbor (Uma Thurman) to impersonate her. The mistaken-identity ruse never escalates into screwball lunacy—it's more like *Cyran* by way of *Friends*. **B+** (#324, April 26) —OG

TWISTER (PG-13) The fabulous tornado-whipped cows, houses, and tractor-trailers in this big-ticket disaster flick are a tribute to the talents of the kids in the special-effects room. But for summer-movie adrenaline junkies spoiled by *Die Hard*s, *Lethal Weapons*, and director Jan De Bont's own 1994 whammy, *Speed*, this appealingly noisy thriller provides surprisingly little liftoff; essentially, we're turned on by debris. Game, plucky Helen Hunt and wooden Bill Paxton play scientists estranged in marriage but united in their obsession with chasing Oklahoma's most dangerous tornadoes. Cary Elwes, with lip curled, plays a well-funded, mildly evil competitor. You don't sense much fear from these characters, but there's plenty of wind, and a lot of yelling while maneuvering pickup trucks down storm-blasted roads raining livestock. **B** (#328, May 24) —LS

BOX OFFICE

LET'S TWIST AGAIN

THAT GIANT whoosh you heard was *Twister* siphoning 55 percent of the weekend's receipts, as the windy smash slowed a mere 10 percent. Poor *Flipper*, the first feature from former MCA president/COO Sid Sheinberg's new company, The Bubble Factory, became the summer's first belly flop, as its hoped-for family audience opted instead for PG-13-rated tornadoes. Poised to reach \$100 million in 12 days—only *Jurassic Park*, *The Lion King*, and the three *Batmans* did it faster—*Twister* has raised the pole so high that the rest of the season's would-be blockbusters have their, uh, mission cut out for them.



HAIL, TWISTER: Paxton and Helen Hunt soak their competition

WEEKEND GROSS* TOP 20

	WEEKEND GROSS*	TOP 20	GROSS TO DATE	WEEKS IN RELEASE
1	\$37.1	TWISTER Warner Bros., Bill Paxton	\$95.1	2
2	\$4.2	FLIPPER Universal, Elijah Wood	\$4.2	1
3	\$3.0	THE CRAFT Columbia, Neve Campbell	\$16.5	3
4	\$2.9	THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS & DOGS 20th Century Fox, Janeane Garofalo	\$24.3	4
5	\$2.3	HEAVEN'S PRISONERS New Line, Alec Baldwin	\$2.3	1
6	\$2.0	PRIMAL FEAR Paramount, Richard Gere	\$51.1	7
7	\$1.6	THE QUEST Universal, Jean-Claude Van Damme	\$18.6	4
8	\$1.3	THE BIRDCAVE United Artists, Robin Williams	\$117.1	11
9	\$1.0	EXECUTIVE DECISION Warner Bros., Kurt Russell	\$54.1	10
10	\$0.8	THE GREAT WHITE HYPE 20th Century Fox, Samuel L. Jackson	\$6.9	3
11	\$0.8	JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH Walt Disney, Animated	\$25.8	6
12	\$0.7	ORIGINAL GANGSTAS Orion, Fred Williamson	\$2.2	2
13	\$0.7	THE PALLBEARER Miramax, David Schwimmer	\$4.9	3
14	\$0.6	A THIN LINE BETWEEN LOVE & HATE New Line, Martin Lawrence	\$32.7	7
15	\$0.6	MULHOLLAND FALLS MGM, Nick Nolte	\$10.8	4
16	\$0.6	FARGO Gramercy, Frances McDormand	\$21.0	11
17	\$0.5	SGT. BILKO Universal, Steve Martin	\$28.9	8
18	\$0.5	LAST DANCE Touchstone, Sharon Stone	\$5.5	3
19	\$0.4	FLIRTING WITH DISASTER Miramax, Ben Stiller	\$13.2	9
20	\$0.4	FEAR Universal, Mark Wahlberg	\$19.3	6

WEEKEND PER-SCREEN AVERAGE†

TOP 10 / PER SCREEN

	WEEKEND PER-SCREEN AVERAGE†	TOP 10 / PER SCREEN	NO. OF SITES**
1	\$13,319	TWISTER Warner Bros.	2,785
2	\$2,546	HEAVEN'S PRISONERS New Line	907
3	\$1,765	FLIPPER Universal	2,385
4	\$1,758	THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS & DOGS 20th Century Fox	1,654
5	\$1,713	THE CRAFT Columbia	1,762
6	\$1,443	ORIGINAL GANGSTAS Orion	480
7	\$1,343	FARGO Gramercy	410
8	\$1,280	FLIRTING WITH DISASTER Miramax	345
9	\$1,241	EXECUTIVE DECISION Warner Bros.	827
10	\$1,132	PRIMAL FEAR Paramount	1,728

SOURCE: EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO. INC.

*WEEKEND OF MAY 17-19 (ALL DOLLAR FIGURES IN MILLIONS)

†DRAWN FROM 20 TOP-GROSSING FILMS

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Pushing Their Luck

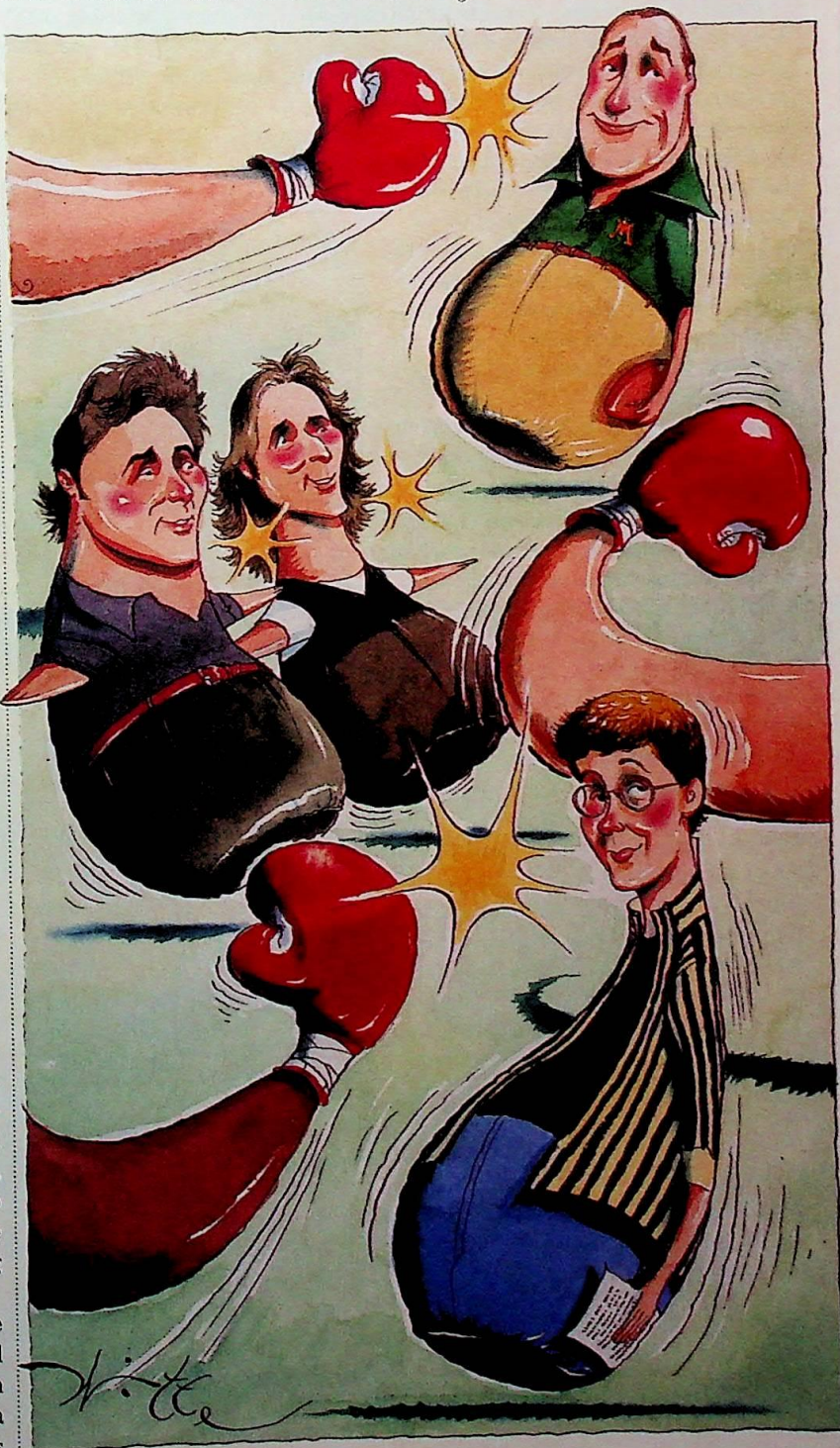
Tenacious sitcoms 'Coach,' 'Dave's World,' and 'Wings' are like Weebles—they may wobble, but they won't fall down.... What we want to know is, Why?! **BY KEN TUCKER**

IT'S A BIG TV world, with something for almost anyone, but I'm sure there are shows you regularly flick past, thinking "You mean *that's* still on?" You know what I'm referring to: sitcoms whose comedy evaporated immediately after their pilot episodes; shows that seem so threadbare of quality, it's amazing they get renewed year after year. For me, three prime stumpers, a trio of lucky ducks, are **COACH** (ABC, Tuesdays, 9:30–10 p.m.), **DAVE'S WORLD** (CBS, Mondays, 8:30–9 p.m.), and **WINGS** (NBC, Tuesdays, 8:30–9 p.m.).

Coach, now in its eighth season of jerry-built jock jokes, is foremost among inexplicable sitcom successes. Oh, sure, as Hayden Fox, currently coach of the pro football team the Orlando Breakers, Craig T. Nelson does exude effortless conviction—he's got the tidy bulk and easygoing swagger of a middle-aged athlete. And his costar Shelley Fabares, as Hayden's wife, Christine, is both charming and a bona fide baby-boomer icon for her role as the eldest daughter in *The Donna Reed Show* as well as for her incandescent 1962 pop hit, "Johnny Angel."

But the show's two locker-room dumbbells, Luther (Jerry Van Dyke) and Dauber (Bill Fagerbakke), used up whatever nutball appeal they had long ago. And even Nelson looks as if he's just going through the motions, just racking up episodes for those big syndication bucks. *Coach* was never good for major laughs—it's comfort television, the kind of thing people watch simply to be with characters they like. But these days, the *Coach* crew are loud, boring guests in our living room.

While Nelson chose just the right role for himself, Harry Anderson's portrayal of real-life humor writer Dave Barry on *Dave's World* is, first and foremost, a small miracle of miscasting. Anderson, as



TV ATTEMPTS A SUMMER SEASON (SORT OF)

VACATION HOT SLOTS

TV'S FALL-PREMIERE season is a strange beast. "No other industry releases all its products at the same time," says Doug Binzak, Fox senior VP of scheduling. "You don't have 12 blockbuster movies at the same time...it's insane."

Well, get ready to stop the insanity—or at least stanch it a bit.

Faced with increasing competition from cable, which programs year-round, and a glut of new shows in development, the networks are starting to sprinkle original programming throughout that rerun wasteland of summer. Back in 1990, CBS premiered *Northern Exposure* in July, thus proving the hotter months could be a launching pad. The next year, Fox boosted their struggling *Beverly Hills, 90210* with vacation-themed episodes, then debuted *Melrose Place* in July of 1992. After last year's dimly rated off-season, with nary a new show, the networks are once again enrolling in summer school.

The goal is both to get a jump on the fall-premiere orgy and to keep viewers from taking a TV-free vacation. "My mandate? Keep the season going as long as you can," says Preston Beckman, NBC's senior VP of programming.

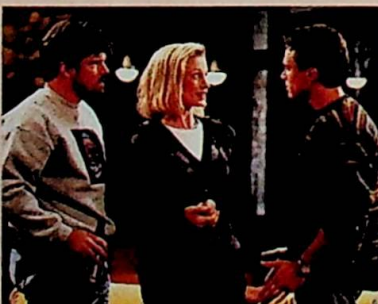
Just don't expect 365 days of fresh TV anytime soon. Not only would overworked production companies revolt, but the networks save swimming poolsful of money with reruns, which they've already paid for. Here's what you can expect this summer.

◆ **FOX:** *L.A. Firefighters*, an ensemble program that tries to bring the frenzy of *ER* to burning buildings, is the big dramatic offering. It debuts June 3, along with the sitcom *The Last Frontier*, about twentysomethings in Alaska (see review, page 50). Then in August, Fox plans to bring back *Party of Five*. "We didn't have any breakout shows this fall," says Binzak, "because we weren't able to get out in front of anything like we did with *Melrose* and *90210*, which became hits before the other guys showed up."

◆ **NBC:** The Peacock won't need much more than the Olympics to keep viewers indoors, but it plans to sprinkle its summer lineup with fresh episodes of *Boston Common*, and possibly *Caroline in the City*. And look for a fashion-themed movie-of-the-week, *On Seventh Avenue*, to sashay on air June 10.

◆ **CBS:** In addition to airing new *60 Minutes* episodes, CBS will try to salvage troubled *Central Park West* by reviving it after May sweeps (June 5, with new stars Gerald McRaney and Raquel Welch). And four unaired episodes of the now-canceled *Picket Fences* will begin June 5.

◆ **ABC:** New episodes of the DreamWorks cop drama *High Incident*, and the occasional special (as in Barbara Walters' *Sex, Drugs, and Consequences* on June 6), are ABC's only announced original programming so far. Let's just hope they don't revive *Buddies*. —Kristen Baldwin and A.J. Jacobs



AIR FRESHENERS: (From top) *Boston Common*, *Central Park*, and *Last Frontier*

he proved as a stand-up comic/magician and then the judge on *Night Court*, specializes in streetwise, laid-back smarm. As Dave, a columnist of suburban humor, he must project a thoroughly engaged smart aleck. So right off the bat, there's a distracting dissonance in the tone of this sitcom. (Anderson is more understandably at ease in his enjoyable vanity special this week, **HARRY ANDERSON: THE TRICKS OF HIS TRADE** (CBS, May 29, 8-9 p.m.), in which he returns to his jokey-magic roots. The best thing on the special, however, isn't him: It's Jay Johnson, the former *Soap* star staying true to his roots—as a ventriloquist—and turning in a smart routine with a monkey dummy.)

The humor on *Dave's World* was encapsulated in the May 20 episode, which grappled with the notion that Dave's wife, Beth (DeLane Matthews), thinks their two boys should attend church even though Dave has no interest himself in going. About religion, Dave whines, "Couldn't they just pick it up on the street, like everything else?" The show, which just completed its third season, also suffers from an oversize cast (including J.C. Wendel as Dave's dim-bimbo assistant), a dreadful theme song (Southside Johnny yowling Billy Joel's "You May Be Right"), and the *really* lucky Shadroe Stevens, hanging in there as Dave's hairy, horny buddy Kenny ("I went to a New Age church for the single—clothes optional").

As for *Wings*, well, the best I can say is that this show about two handsome brothers (Tim Daly and Steven Weber) who run a Nantucket commuter airline is a tad more adroit than *Coach* or *Dave*. At various times in its six-season run, *Wings* has been fitfully funny. I always liked Thomas Haden Church (now Ned on *Ned and Stacey*) as goofball mechanic Lowell, for example. And Daly and Crystal Bernard (airport lunch-counter owner Helen) still have some nice moments of romantic wackiness.

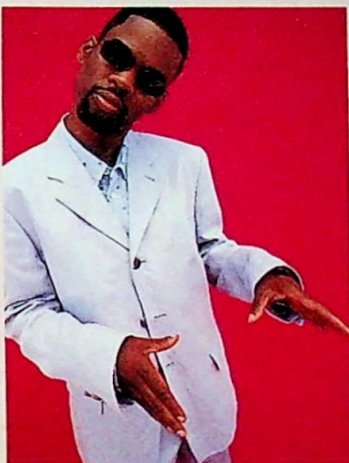
I suppose these comments might lead the *Wings* producers to take the copy of ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY off the set's airport newsstand. *Wings* may be the best of this bunch, but like *Coach* and *Dave's World*, it can't help seeming earthbound exhausted. *Coach*: **D** *Dave's World*: **D** *Harry Anderson: The Tricks of His Trade*: **B** *Wings*: **C**

FROM TOP: PAUL DRINKWATER, WALTER CHIN, CARIN BAER

THE RAKING OF A PRESIDENT, 1996

WHEN THE PRODUCERS of *Politically Incorrect*, Comedy Central's irreverent take on *The McLaughlin Group*, asked comedian Chris Rock if he'd like to cover this year's presidential machinations, he was characteristically skeptical. "I said, 'Me?'" recalls Rock. "'Are you sure you want me?'"

The choice was astute. Says *PI* host Bill Maher, "Chris relates to politics in a non-political way, which is a good thing." And though that's the whole idea behind *PI*, Rock quickly distinguished himself as one of the smartest of the smart-asses. His first assignment was the New Hampshire primary, and his assessment of that state—"I'm having a *real* hard time finding hair-care products up here"—was at once slyly hilarious and painfully apt. "I have the barbershop take on politics," says Rock, 29, who admits to an obsession with Pat Buchanan. "His people did everything but call the dogs on us. But I always wanna talk to a racist," he says seriously. "The other candidates aren't passionate about anything."



ALTERNATIVE ROCK: Politics suit him

Rock describes himself as "a registered Democrat with a Republican wallet." And the money is indeed flowing in—from his *PI* gig, Nike ads (he's the voice of Li'l Penny Hardaway), and a second HBO comedy special, *Bring the Pain* (June 1). He'll also embark on a nationwide stand-up tour this summer and star with Chris Farley in the upcoming movie comedy *Beverly Hills Ninja*.

Like Eddie Murphy, who discovered the stand-up at 18, Rock has an appeal that crosses racial boundaries. "I'm the only guy who could host *Def Comedy Jam* and *Incorrect* and be funny on both," boasts the comic, and he's probably right. While he admits to being as confused as he often looks on *PI*, he's hardly naive. "My dad drove a *Daily News* truck," says the Brooklyn native. "I've read it every day since I was 5. Then I delivered it for a while, so I've always kept abreast." Now a bona fide pundit, Rock pores over several papers daily. Any favorites? "I love the pictures in *USA Today*," he says. "That's a joke." —Maureen Callahan

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THE WEEK

A guide to notable programs by **KEN TUCKER**. (Times are Eastern daylight and are subject to change.)

SERIES

REPLACEMENT SITCOMS are usually as funny as tests of the Emergency Broadcast System. **THE LAST FRONTIER** (Fox, June 3, 8:30-9 p.m.) surpasses that standard and delivers several laughs in its first two episodes. The plot centers on a city girl (Jessica Tuck) who moves to Alaska and rooms with three horny men—a womanizer, a military nerd, and a nice guy. While no one in this ensemble stands out, none of the actors will irritate you to the point of wanting to take a hostage (like, say, the entire cast of *Boston Common*). If this sounds like *Friends in Alaska*, the writers at *Frontier* know it too. In an oddly self-referential scene, the show's cast bop to the *Friends* theme song playing on a jukebox. At least they're honest. —Kristen Baldwin

WINNER of a CableACE award for Best Documentary Series, profiler of such beloved personalities as Grace Kelly, Gregory Peck, and Frank Zappa, **BIOGRAPHY** (A&E, June 3, 8-9 p.m.) delves into the life of Jeffrey Dahmer this week. While we're sure that A&E is dealing in a responsible manner with the noted mass murderer and consumer of his



ICE PICK: Blade runner Yamaguchi throws an axel (or two) in Nike's *Passion*

victims, we also wonder, Why the heck bother? Up next (we kid you not): the Boston Strangler!

THE MESMERIZING *Frontline* presentation of **THE GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE** (PBS, June 4, check local listings), places the 1989 occupation of Tiananmen Square by Chinese protesters in the context of dissent in China throughout its long history. This two-and-a-half-hour film, airing to coincide with the seventh anniversary of the Beijing massacre, features interviews with many of the protesters, as well as some remarkable newsreel footage of Mao's reign of terror against anyone who opposed his Cultural Revolution. What popped up in American news media as a spontaneous outpouring in Tiananmen Square of people crav-

ing freedom is shown in *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* to be a desire with profoundly deep roots.

SPECIALS

FILLED WITH rare performance footage and written with knowledge and care, the six-hour **AMERICA'S MUSIC: THE ROOTS OF COUNTRY** (TBS, June 2, 9, and 16, 7-9 p.m. each night) really does tell you everything you need to know about country music. And, I regret to say, more. Way more. The documentary's implacable chronology makes its way through more than a century of the genre. Scores of performers, from Chet Atkins to Naomi Judd, are interviewed, sometimes pointlessly (does Judd's reaction to Elvis Presley matter?). Kris Krist-

offerson makes a lugubrious narrator, and the fifth hour takes a few aimless turns with examinations of the '60s folk-music revival and contemporary zydeco. One person's fascinating detail (love that discussion of banjo playing—comparing traditional "clawhammer" strumming with Earl Scruggs' revolutionary three-finger style) is another person's irrelevance (who cares what kind of influence the Kingston Trio had on country?). That said, *America's Music* also offers many priceless glimpses of America's least esteemed popular-music form.

MTV's SLOW, thickheaded cousin is now offering **VH1 ARCHIVES** (VH1, May 29, 9-9:30 p.m.) and **STORYTELLERS** (VH1, June 2, 10-11 p.m.), two new series in the cable network's never-ending attempt to attract sizable numbers of baby boomers. Each week, *Archives* will offer rare television appearances by rock stars. The debut, for example, features Janis Joplin on a 1969 installment of *The Dick Cavett Show*, which is interesting not only for Joplin's performance (strong-voiced and assured) but also for Cavett's interview with her: Joplin is shy yet opinionated; Cavett is smug but much more interested in eliciting conversation than Leno and Letterman are these days. *Storytellers*, on the other hand, presents contemporary footage of artists explaining the genesis of their songs; the premiere spends an hour with the Kinks' Ray Davies. He's shown performing with an acoustic guitar for a small club audience, and I presume that this amiable, if aimless, sing-and-chat session is part of his current show, *20th Century Man: An Evening With Ray Davies*. It will be interesting to see if future storytellers—which include Jackson Browne, Elvis Costello, and Lyle Lovett—fare as well as Davies without the structure of formal nostalgia *20th Century Man*

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Herald Examiner
SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 1996
BOY FALLS FROM TREE, ENTERS WORLD RULED BY THIRTEEN YEAR OLDS
BY MICHAEL MURPHY
While family and friends around his bedside hoped for the best, 17-year-old Michael Murphy was not at all sure he was going to survive. The boy, who was 17 years old, was found hanging from a tree in his backyard. The police are not sure how he got there, but they are sure he was alone. The boy's death has caused a lot of speculation about the possibility of a new world ruled by thirteen-year-olds. The boy's death has caused a lot of speculation about the possibility of a new world ruled by thirteen-year-olds.

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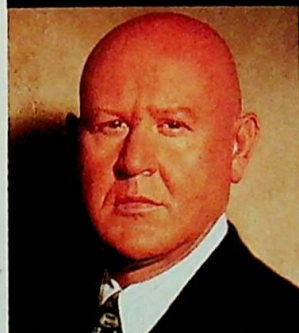
'Murder One'

ABC granted a stay of execution to Steven Bochco's critically praised, ratings-deprived courtroom drama. It will return next fall opposite (uh-oh) *Seinfeld*.

LOSER OF THE WEEK

Daniel Benzali

One person who won't be tearing his hair out over *Murder's* new time slot: the series' smooth-domed star, who won't be returning.



provides. *Archives* has the advantage of vintage-TV charm; *Storytellers* will rise or fall on the articulateness of its subjects.

SOUND BITES

"THANKS TO your gloomy music, my children have stopped dreaming about a future I can't possibly provide!" —**Homer Simpson**, expressing his appreciation to the Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan, on *The Simpsons*

"JERRY SEINFELD's girlfriend, Shoshanna Lonstein, turns 21 years old next week. Seinfeld said in honor of the event he'll stop bathing her in the sink."
—**Conan O'Brien** on *Late Night*

"WHILE PERFORMING in New York this week to a packed audience, Yoko Ono shocked the crowd by tearing up the Bible. Most shocking of all—Yoko Ono performed to a packed audience."
—**Norm MacDonald** on *Saturday Night Live*

MOVIES

YOU'D NEVER think snatching cheddar cheese off a spring-loaded mousetrap could be as exciting as it seems in **THE RETURN OF THE BORROWERS** (TNT, June 4 and 5, 8-10 p.m. each night), a beguiling sequel to TNT's 1993 *The Borrowers*. The productions are based on Mary Norton's classic children's novels about the clan of wee folk who "borrow" from we normal-size people the items they need to live. *Return* is little more than a series of quicksilver encounters with and escapes from "the human beans" by the tiny Borrowers, but Ian Holm (*Chariots of Fire*) as proud little Pod and Penelope Wilton (*Cry Freedom*) as Homily Clock are wonderfully dignified in the midst of miniature lightheartedness. Well written and carefully acted, with modest but neatly executed special effects, *Return* is children's programming anyone can enjoy.

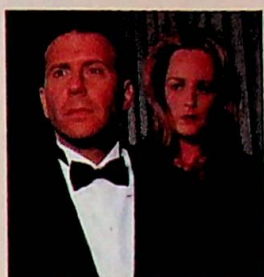
CHOICE RERUNS

WINTER IS OVER and the ubiquitous figure skating competitions have faded from the TV horizon, but ice addicts used to weekly fixes can make do with **NIKE PRESENTS A PASSION TO PLAY: WOMEN'S FIGURE SKATING** (Lifetime, June 2, 10-11 p.m.). This special, which aired on ABC last March, profiles three of skating's best-known women: Dorothy Hamill, Kristi Yamaguchi, and Nancy Kerrigan, who talk about what goes on in their lives when they're not perfecting their salchows at the rink. The question remains, Do we care? Sure, when the stories involve a crazed competitor or a vicious career-threatening attack or filing for bankruptcy. Just call it *As the Axel Turns*. —KB

THE RATINGS

SCENES FROM A MARRIAGE

Turns out the mystery viewers *really* cared about this Sunday wasn't on the series finale of CBS' *Murder, She Wrote* (21st). It was the marital fate of *Mad About You's* Paul and Jamie Buchman (6th). They *didn't* get a divorce, so we can all move on now. The 20-year marriage of Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert got two thumbs down from the critics in TV land: Their CBS interview special flopped at 82nd, despite the participation of "not just another pretty face" Brad Pitt. Viewers were out there for Fox's *X-Files* season ender (14th) but mostly stayed away from "Homerpalooza," *The Simpsons* (45th) finale. And an NBC success may bode well for ABC: Actress Melissa Joan Hart, star of the alphabet network's fall sitcom *Sabrina, The Teenage Witch*, had enough appeal to propel her NBC movie, *Twisted Desire*, into the top 20.



SPLIT DECISION: Helen Hunt stays *Mad* with Paul Reiser

VIEWERS' TOP 20

	VIEWERS*	PROGRAM	LAST WEEK
1	34.3	ER NBC, Thursday, 10 p.m.	1
2	33.2	SEINFELD NBC, Thursday, 9 p.m.	2
3	29.3	CAROLINE IN THE CITY NBC, Thursday, 9:30 p.m.	4
4	29.0	FRIENDS NBC, Thursday, 8 p.m.	3
5	24.5	THE SINGLE GUY NBC, Thursday, 8:30 p.m.	7
6	22.9	HOME IMPROVEMENT ABC, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	9
	22.9	MAD ABOUT YOU NBC, Sunday, 8 p.m.	—
8	21.0	ROSEANNE ABC, Tuesday, 8 p.m.	6
9	19.8	NYPD BLUE ABC, Tuesday, 10 p.m.	11
10	18.4	COACH ABC, Tuesday, 9:30 p.m.	—
11	18.3	WALKER, TEXAS RANGER CBS, Saturday, 10 p.m.	13
12	18.2	TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL CBS, Saturday, 9 p.m.	17
13	18.0	MOVIE: THE FIRM ABC, Sunday, 8 p.m.	—
14	17.9	THE X-FILES Fox, Friday, 9 p.m.	30
15	17.4	THE NANNY CBS, Monday, 8 p.m.	20
	17.4	GRACE UNDER FIRE ABC, Wednesday, 9 p.m.	15
17	17.3	FRASIER NBC, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	16
	17.3	LAW & ORDER NBC, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	29
19	17.2	MOVIE: TWISTED DESIRE NBC, Monday, 9 p.m.	—
20	16.7	PRIMETIME LIVE ABC, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	37

BOTTOM 10

89	3.4	THE SENTINEL UPN, Wednesday, 8 p.m.	86
90	3.3	NOWHERE MAN UPN, Monday, 9 p.m.	86
91	3.0	SWIFT JUSTICE UPN, Wednesday, 9 p.m.	91
92	2.8	MINOR ADJUSTMENTS UPN, Tuesday, 8:30 p.m.	88
	2.8	SISTER, SISTER (R) WB, Sunday, 8 p.m.	89
94	2.7	KIRK (R) WB, Sunday, 8:30 p.m.	85
95	2.5	THE PARANORMAL BORDERLINE UPN, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	90
96	2.1	THE PARENT HOOD (R) WB, Sunday, 7:30 p.m.	92
97	1.9	PINKY & THE BRAIN (R) WB, Sunday, 7 p.m.	94
	1.9	SAVANNAH (R) WB, Sunday, 9 p.m.	92

*IN MILLIONS WEEK OF MAY 13-19, 1996 (R) RERUN
SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH

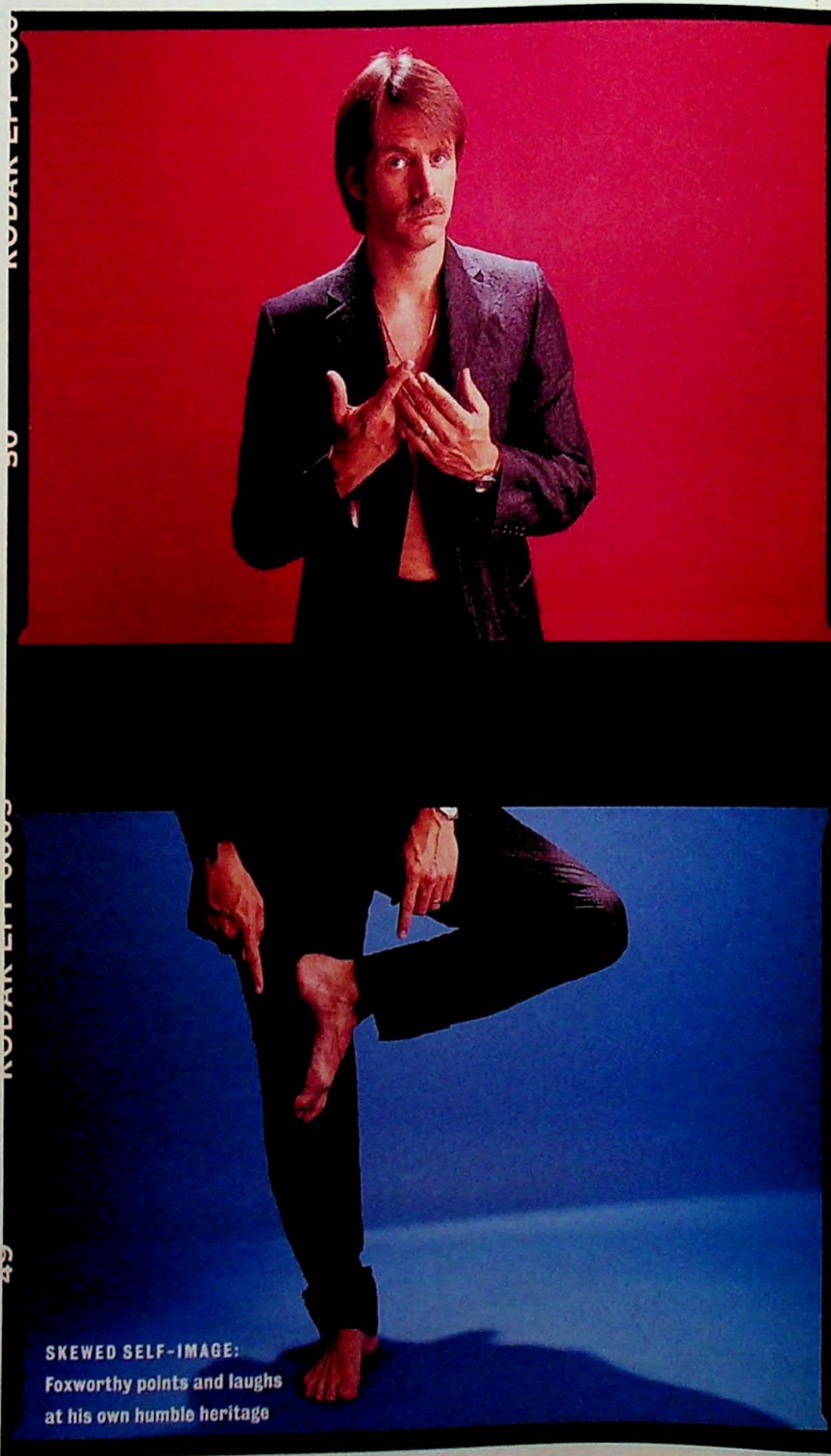
In the Hick of It

Jeff Foxworthy uses down-home humor and redneck reflections to retrace his life—from Southern roots to Hollywood stardom—in 'No Shirt. No Shoes.... No Problem!' BY GENE LYONS

WHAT'S THE story on Jeff Foxworthy, the amiable and terribly funny Georgia cracker who's turned the word *redneck* into a personal trademark? Foxworthy's paperback gag book, *You Might Be a Redneck If...*, sold like crazy in every part of America where Red Man tobacco is chewed and stock-car racer Richard Petty is considered a national hero. The book spawned a really awful TV show, set in Indiana, of all places. Were ABC executives afraid that nobody would tune in to a show that was too Southern? NBC has picked up *The Jeff Foxworthy Show* for another season; here's hoping it's got sense enough to give the comic some creative control.

Now comes **NO SHIRT. NO SHOES.... NO PROBLEM!** (Hyperion, \$19.95). In the course of this jokey autobiography—more a scaffolding for a series of gags than his life story—Foxworthy gets serious about one thing: "One reason I make redneck jokes," he writes, "is, well...I have to. Otherwise, having to endure an attitude from the rest of the country that Southerners are stupid and backward would be too depressing.... When people hear me talk they automatically want to deduct a hundred IQ points."

But Foxworthy can't keep a straight face for long. Soon after defending Southerners' intelligence, he's kidding about being operated on by a redneck brain surgeon. ("What we gon' do is saw the top of yer head off, root aroun' in 'er with a stick and see if we cain't maybe find that dadburned clot.") And then he explains why he's reluctant to entrust his money to a Southern financial adviser. ("Well, the key is you got to di-ver-si-fy wi' yer money. What we'll do is we'll take half of it, put it in a big mayonnaise jar,



SKewed SELF-IMAGE:
Foxworthy points and laughs
at his own humble heritage

bury it out in yer backyard. The other half we'll take down to the dog track and bet on the one that does his business right before the race starts.")

Foxworthy comes by all this honestly. A native of the Atlanta suburb of Hapeville, Ga., he grew up in a dysfunctional family of wisecracking practical jokers. Between them, his parents have been married nine times. Apart from that detail, there's very little self-revelation: virtually nothing about his television show, and not much more than that about his personal life. (Of his wife, he says: "I've always liked brunettes. I've always liked small women. I like them with spit and fire. She had all three.")

Foxworthy's stand-up act has generally been free of scatological humor—not so this book, long stretches of which are devoted to flatulence, snot, diarrhea, mooning, projectile vomiting, etc. There's some sexual scorekeeping and even a hint of smugness about his celebrity status, which his fans won't appreciate. (He complains about appearing in Atlanta, where his acquaintances expect bushels of free tickets, and he lectures readers about interrupting celebrities while they're eating.) But how can you stay mad at a guy who brings a Coleman stove into his bedroom to offer his wife a hot-oil massage? As long as you're not seeking insights into the *real* Jeff Foxworthy, *No Shirt. No Shoes.... No Problem!* is as loopy and consistently entertaining a showbiz autobiography as you're apt to encounter on either side of the Mason-Dixon line. **B+**

Three on Base

Stephen King scores big with his latest 'Green Mile'

WITH *THE GREEN MILE, PART 3: COFFEY'S HANDS* (Signet, \$2.99), Stephen King's serialized novel reaches the halfway point and hits its stride. Early on in the current installment, our narrator, Paul Edgecombe—now a brittle retiree living in a Georgia nursing home, but once the cell-block superintendent at Cold Mountain state penitentiary—promises to reveal his true reasons for telling us about what happened to him during the



unseasonably hot autumn of 1932. "Now let's just see if you believe it," he says. And at long last, patient readers, things supernatural finally punch their way into this story.

Those of you who have been following King's cliff-hanger for the past few months won't be surprised to discover that John Coffey, the bald-headed black giant sentenced to die in the prison's electric chair, turns out to be a "hoodoo man." Since his arrival on death row, nicknamed the Green Mile, Coffey has been a fascinating puzzle to Edgecombe, who can't reconcile the prisoner's gentle-

ness with the two brutal murders he presumably committed. But when Coffey cures Edgecombe's chronic urinary infection by just a touch of his enormous hands, fascination turns to fervent gratitude.

Suddenly, the executioner feels driven to learn everything he can about the mystery man he's been charged with strapping into "Old Sparky"—and, if possible, to establish his innocence. Edgecombe's investigation, however, turns eerie once he discovers that Coffey seems never to have existed in the world before his arrest.

Because King is so prolific, it's easy to dismiss him as merely a talented goose-bump machine. Truth is, while nobody was noticing, he's become one of

the most inventive, interesting, and humane novelists we have. And if you doubt that, just pay close attention to how he juggles several parallel story lines, how he shades his characterizations, and how he evokes the gritty texture and claustrophobia of Depression-era prison life—then check out the scene in which Edgecombe visits a newspaper reporter who covered Coffey's murder trial. Perfectly crafted and paced, it will set your hair on end. At the same time, it will break your heart. *The Green Mile*, like its creator, just keeps on getting better and better. **A** —Tom De Haven

BIG DEAL

GAUZE AND EFFECT

◆ IT'S A WRAP: Highest bidder 20th Century Fox has acquired the film rights to Anne Rice's 1989 novel *The Mummy*, paying approximately \$3 million for producer/director James Cameron (*The Terminator*). Rights to the novel, which features a 3,200-year-old, exquisitely preserved specimen named Ramses, were entombed by now-bankrupt production company Carolco. "Rice is a great admirer of Jim Cameron," says her lawyer, Christine Cuddy. "She is very, very pleased. And obviously, she's happy to be priced in that league." *That league* refers to the boys' club presided over by fellow thriller writers Michael Crichton and John Grisham, who earned, respectively, \$3.5 million and \$6 million plus for recent movie deals. But will a Hollywood hunk be willing to play the pharaoh? Cuddy insists, "This is a very, very handsome mummy." —Alexandra Jacobs

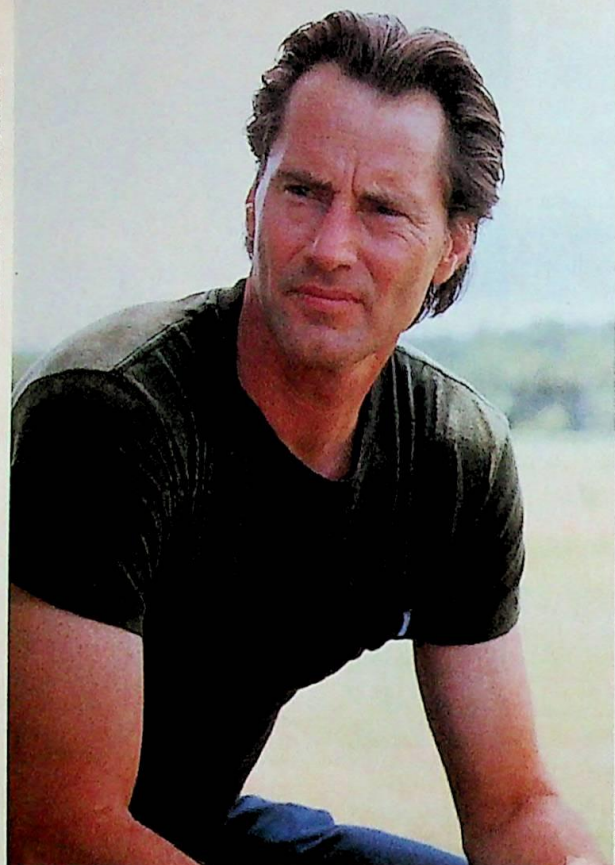


THE WEEK

FICTION

CRUISING PARADISE Sam Shepard (*Knopf, \$23*) Sam Shepard was a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright (*Buried Child*) long before he became a Hollywood heartthrob (*The Right Stuff*) and sometime director (*Far North*). In *Cruising Paradise*, a collection of "tales" that range from journallike anecdotes to fully plotted stories, Shepard mines his signature themes, which include drunken dads, picaresque Western road trips, and romantic dramas between men and women whose signals are permanently crossed. The jewel of this collection is the title story, in which a boy conducts an ad hoc purgation ritual by setting fire to the "death mattress" on which his alcoholic father was immolated. Shepard's pieces of pure dialogue are hit-or-miss affairs, and some of his slice-of-life meanderings are merely evocative, if always dexterously rendered. But his more developed stories are vividly compelling and often funny, delineating rugged landscapes peopled by loners, cowpunks—and even a few movie stars. **A-** —Margot Mifflin

BABEL TOWER A.S. Byatt (*Random House, \$25.95*) Educated Frederica marries a country gent who becomes abusive; she escapes to London, her small son in tow, to



PARADISE FOUND: Shepard's tales flock to familiar but fertile territory

reestablish her neglected literary life; then she fights breathtakingly sexist divorce proceedings. If this story of a woman finding liberation in swinging '60s England sounds somewhat predictable, or simplistically feminist, think again. In this dazzling epic, Byatt (who won the Booker Prize for *Possession*) employs the entire Day-Glo palette of a decade grappling with unprecedented freedom. Various subplots—like the one about a communal utopia-turned-sadomasochistic nightmare—explore the limits of "free love"; artistic freedom is examined when a friend of Frederica's is charged with obscenity.

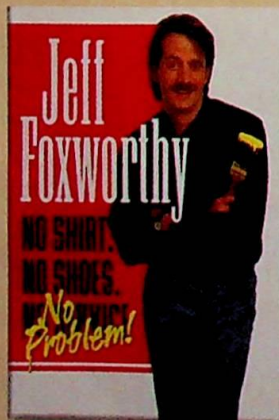
Most amazing is that *Babel Tower* takes entertaining advantage of the myriad "languages," or genres, it employs—from fantasy to eroticism to courtroom drama—while never sacrificing its nuanced intellectual exactitude. Like a marvelous tapestry, Byatt has woven together the meaningful dialogues of an era, with all their flaws and beauty. **A** —Megan Harlan

NONFICTION

POWERFUL PEOPLE Roy Rowan (*Carroll & Graf, \$24*) This book isn't so much about powerful people as it

is about the 50-year, helluva-ride journalistic career of its author, a thoroughly game international correspondent and editor for the Time-Life conglomerate who's met more world leaders than Forrest Gump. Nor should one expect a comprehensive, ordered survey of world politics from chapters that nonetheless have the meaty detail of a history textbook. Rather, Rowan uses thoughts about power as a general rubric under which to organize a staggeringly broad array of reporter's anecdotes: dinner with Imelda Marcos during a popular uprising; clashes with anti-integrationists in Little Rock, Ark.; tense discussions with that unwitting chronicler of JFK's assassination, Abraham Zapruder. However much Rowan protests to the contrary, this *is* a memoir above all else—but when your life features intimate brushes with billionaires, revolutionaries, and Presidents, it makes for an enviably memorable memoir. **A-** —AJ

THE DILBERT PRINCIPLE: A CUBICLE'S-EYE VIEW OF BOSSES, MEETINGS, MANAGEMENT FADS & OTHER WORK-PLACE AFFLICTIONS Scott Adams (*HarperBusiness, \$20*) In this how-to guide to office life, Adams (who's been lampooning the subject in his popular comic strip, *Dilbert*, since 1989) has combined management-survival tips with his own cartoons. Adding believe-it-or-not samples from the more than 200 E-mails he receives daily from real-life workers, he explains why business is so absurd, how to look busy when you're not, and why computer programmers are such oddballs. With his familiar characters populating the pages—Dilbert, the techie with the turned-up tie; his Machiavellian sidekick, Dogbert; and the boss who can't tell an Etch-A-Sketch from a laptop—Adams has cannily skewered life around the water cooler. **A** —Daneet Steffens



Jeff Foxworthy is out with a riotous new book. And while "you might be a redneck if" you pick up a copy, you really don't have to be. There's enough merriment to get everyone laughing as America's prime-time Southern-fried comedian takes on the universal issues of growing up, friendship, marriage, parenthood, family vacations, work, and politics. Ah! You're smiling already.

Hyperion \$19.95
Barnes & Noble \$13.96
Price effective through 6/13/96.

30%
OFF

Looking for a great book?

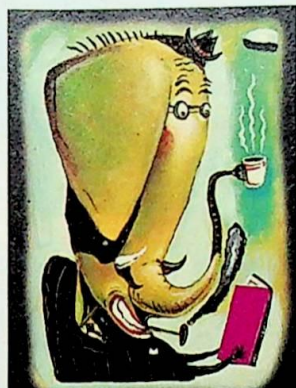
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LOGROLLERS OF THE WEEK

Republicans

John Calvin Batchelor's "short history of the GOP," *Ain't You Glad You Joined the Republicans?*, features ringing endorsements from Bob Dole, Alfonse D'Amato, and Gerald Ford.

LEGAL VICTOR OF THE WEEK

Jeffrey Archer

The novelist prevailed over the youngest son of the late media baron Robert Maxwell, who tried to ban Archer's new novel, *The Fourth Estate* (the tale of "two ambitious, ironhanded press barons and their [quest] to control the world's media"). Hmm, does Rupert Murdoch know about this?

THE SIZE OF THOUGHTS: ESSAYS AND OTHER LUMBER Nicholson Baker (*Random House*, \$25) At once intellectual sleuth and class clown, Baker is a radical in the word's mathematical sense: He gets to the root. His capacity for dissection covers such arcane topics as model airplanes, toenails, and the obscure books spotted on the shelves of furniture catalogs. Most compelling is his analysis of what we've lost as our libraries have discarded card catalogs for online databases. Yet Baker's no knee-jerk technophobe. His rigor is so extensive that

there's little chance of safely anticipating his conclusions, which makes for a compelling, albeit challenging, read. **B+** —Joel Drucker

PARADISE GARDEN: A TRIP THROUGH HOWARD FINSTER'S VISIONARY WORLD Robert Peacock, with Annibel Jenkins (*Chronicle*, \$22.95) Probably the best-known unknown artist in America, the Rev. Howard Finster is an eccentric whose evangelical work has appeared on album covers for R.E.M. and Talking Heads, and landed him on *The Tonight Show*. Finster, who calls himself "God's junk man," brings new meaning to the phrase "Jesus Saves." His *Paradise Garden* in Summerville, Ga., is a scrap collector's heaven in which broken glass, rusted bicycles, and cement-filled "tater chip boxes" fuel his artistic and religious whimsy. The book's cumbersome introductory essay includes no mention of this 80-year-old's early life, his five children, or his wife of six decades; and Finster's own charming commentary is inset in photos of pieces that often don't correspond to the works he describes. Photographically, *Paradise* is an earthly delight; textually, Finster deserves better. **B** —MM

PAPERBACKS

INDEPENDENCE DAY Richard Ford (*Vintage Contemporaries*, \$13) One badly wants to like both this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and its narrator, Frank Bascombe, whose marriage collapsed and oldest son died in Ford's *The Sportsman*. Now a real-estate agent in Haddam, N.J., Bascombe provides a minutely detailed account of a moderately disastrous July 4 weekend. A vivid, witty, but unpleasurable depiction of a man hovering on the edge of clinical depression. **B**

IVY LEAGUE STRIPPER Heidi Mattson (*St. Martin's*, \$6.99) The author—a flat-chested working-class refugee from rural Maine—put herself through Brown University by taking it off. Anti-intellectual to the core, she writes entertainingly about her adventures but gets in over her head by trying to philosophize about gender and society. **B+**

AS THOUSANDS CHEER: THE LIFE OF IRVING BERLIN Laurence Bergreen (*Da Capo Press*, \$18.95) In this colorful history, we learn how Russian immigrant and singing waiter Israel Baline reinvented himself as the dapper but reserved Irving Berlin, one of America's greatest composers of popular music ("God Bless America," "White Christmas"). A vivid biography, with the sweeping range that a crowded, century-long life requires. **A**

BEST-SELLERS

'AMELIA' AIRBORNE

FIRST NOVELS often get their wings clipped. But Jane Mendelsohn's romantic take on a famous pilot's final flight got a little help from radio personality Don Imus. His wife passed *I Was Amelia Earhart* to him after discovering it during a bookstore browse. A week after his first on-air plug, new orders flew in for 60,000 copies; there are now 225,000 in print—and a six-figure film deal with Fine Line Features.

I Was
Amelia
Earhart



Jane Mendelsohn

FICTION

- | | WEEKS
ON LIST |
|--|------------------|
| 1 HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK
Terry McMillan, <i>Viking</i> , \$23.95 | 2 |
| 2 THE TENTH INSIGHT James Redfield, <i>Warner</i> , \$19.95 | 3 |
| 3 MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU
Mary Higgins Clark, <i>Simon & Schuster</i> , \$24 | 6 |
| 4 MALICE Danielle Steel, <i>Delacorte</i> , \$24.95 | 5 |
| 5 THE CELESTINE PROPHECY James Redfield, <i>Warner</i> , \$17.95 | 115 |
| 6 NEANDERTHAL John Darnton, <i>Random House</i> , \$24 | 5 |
| 7 SUDDEN PREY John Sandford, <i>Putnam</i> , \$23.95 | 1 |
| 8 PRIMARY COLORS Anonymous, <i>Random House</i> , \$24 | 16 |
| 9 I WAS AMELIA EARTHART Jane Mendelsohn, <i>Knopf</i> , \$18 | 3 |
| 10 THE HORSE WHISPERER Nicholas Evans, <i>Delacorte</i> , \$23.95 | 35 |

NONFICTION

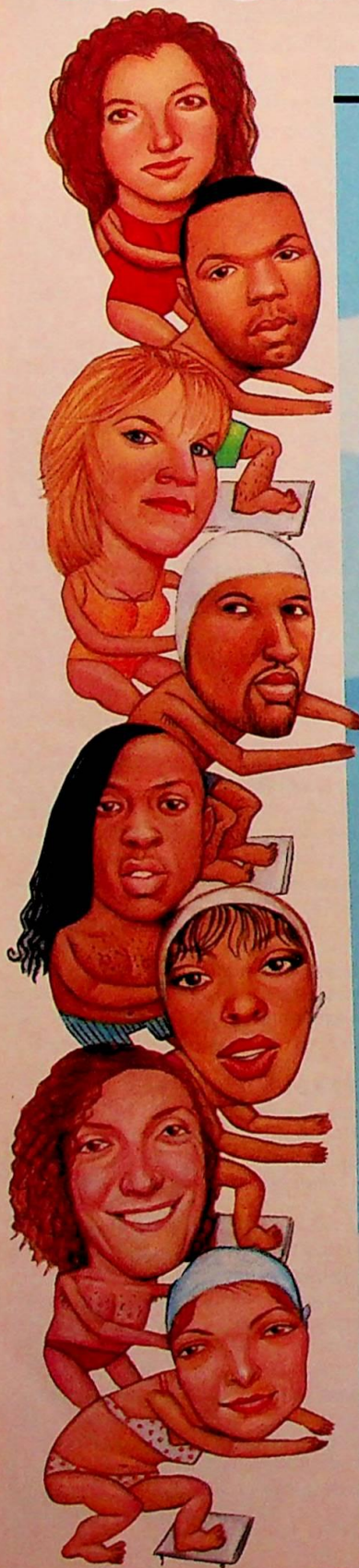
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|---|-----|
| 1 BAD AS I WANNA BE
Dennis Rodman, with Tim Keown, <i>Delacorte</i> , \$22.95 | 2 |
| 2 SIMPLE ABUNDANCE Sarah Ban Breathnach, <i>Warner</i> , \$17.95 | 8 |
| 3 IN CONTEMPT
Christopher A. Darden, with Jess Walter, <i>ReganBooks</i> , \$26 | 8 |
| 4 MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS
John Gray, <i>HarperCollins</i> , \$23 | 162 |
| 5 THE DILBERT PRINCIPLE Scott Adams, <i>HarperBusiness</i> , \$20 | 4 |
| 6 THE ZONE Barry Sears, Ph.D., with Bill Lawren, <i>ReganBooks</i> , \$22 | 12 |
| 7 THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL LAWS OF SUCCESS
Deepak Chopra, <i>New World Library</i> , \$14 | 65 |
| 8 UNDAUNTED COURAGE
Stephen E. Ambrose, <i>Simon & Schuster</i> , \$27.50 | 12 |
| 9 MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL
John Berendt, <i>Random House</i> , \$23 | 97 |
| 10 RUSH LIMBAUGH IS A BIG FAT IDIOT AND OTHER OBSERVATIONS
Al Franken, <i>Delacorte</i> , \$21.95 | 17 |

TRADE PAPERBACKS

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1 A THIRD SERVING OF CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL
Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen, <i>Health Communications</i> , \$12.95 | 4 |
| 2 CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL
Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen, <i>Health Communications</i> , \$12.95 | 94 |
| 3 SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS
David Guterson, <i>Vintage</i> , \$12 | 32 |
| 4 REVIVING OPHELIA Mary Pipher, Ph.D., <i>Ballantine</i> , \$12.50 | 57 |
| 5 DR. ATKINS' NEW DIET REVOLUTION
Dr. Robert C. Atkins, <i>M. Evans</i> , \$12.95 | 19 |
| 6 THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE
Stephen R. Covey, <i>Fireside</i> , \$12 | 276 |
| 7 LADDER OF YEARS Anne Tyler, <i>Fawcett/Columbine</i> , \$12 | 7 |
| 8 WE'RE RIGHT, THEY'RE WRONG: A HANDBOOK FOR SPIRITED PROGRESSIVES
James Carville, <i>Random House and Simon & Schuster</i> , \$10 | 11 |
| 9 THERE'S TREASURE EVERYWHERE: A CALVIN AND HOBBS COLLECTION
Bill Watterson, <i>Andrews and McMeel</i> , \$14.95 | 9 |
| 10 MOO Jane Smiley, <i>Fawcett/Columbine</i> , \$12 | 9 |

SOURCE: PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

Torch Song Trill Orgy



ARTIST/ALBUM

SONG

ARTISTIC IMPRESSION

**Amy Grant and
Patty Loveless**
One Voice

"Every
Kinda
People"

Robert Palmer's white-calypso oldie re-made as world-beat supermarket music.

Boyz II Men
*Rhythm of the
Games*

"The Star
Spangled
Banner"

Possibly the most polite, least grandstanding version ever of the national anthem, by the new-jack barbershop quartet.

Trisha Yearwood
One Voice

"The
Flame"

Lite FM love song ("O come ye now unto the flame/Keep it through the night") that doubles as paean to the ceremony's hunk-a-burnin' torch.

Tony Rich
*Rhythm of the
Games*

"You're a
Winner"

Taut, evocative slice of slicky soul. Bonus point: Underlying tone of resignation could double as consolation theme for losers!

Corey Glover
*Rhythm of the
Games*

"Imagine"

Ex-Living Colour singer reinterprets the John Lennon socialist-manifesto ballad as theme song for megagrossing capitalist sporting event.

**Nanci Griffith,
Raul Malo, and
Donna Summer**
*Rhythm of the
Games*

"From a
Distance"

Umpteenth version of the unofficial Earth Day lullaby, with added gimmick of synchronized singing by three ethnically diverse vocalists.

Kenny G
*Rhythm of the
Games*

"The
Champion's
Theme"

Squirrely instrumental much like standard G-rated fare, but with billowy orchestration that should have been saved for the opening ceremonies.

Gloria Estefan
*Rhythm of the
Games*

"Reach"

A main event, one of those believe-in-yourself inspirational books set to music: "I'll do whatever it takes/Follow through with the promise I make/Put it all on the line."

A H, THE OLYMPICS: perspiration-soaked jocks of all races and creeds, tie-in products from McDonald's. Music doesn't instantly pole-vault to mind, but the record business, in cooperation with the U.S. Olympic Committee, wants to change that perception this year. Five Games-related albums are now competing for your dollars, the most star-studded of which are the Nashville-made **ONE VOICE** (MCA) and the R&B-flavored

RHYTHM OF THE GAMES (LaFace/Arista). (Albums steeped in classical and Latin music are also in stores, and a collection of Olympic-inspired jazz will be released in a few weeks.) In the spirit of the occasion, we put highlights from these two compilations through our own rigorous contest, with songs judged in the categories of artistic impression, technical merit, and degree of difficulty. May the best musician win. —David Browne

TECHNICAL MERIT	DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY	SCORE
Hard to imagine a paler calypso singer than Robert Palmer, but Grant and Loveless go for the gold with ease.	Material mostly requires vocal bounciness—so why does this tag team need four pumped-up background singers?	4.0
Limp, surprisingly thin harmonies, even for the Boyz: If this rendition had been around during the War of 1812, the Brits would have kicked our butts.	Not even agile soloist Wanya Morris can tackle the notorious vocal-cord-slaying phrase "and the rockets' red glaaaare..." without signs of strain.	2.6
Orchestral intro exceeds time limit, but Yearwood's poised, confident delivery clears that hurdle and triumphs over the watercolor blandness of arrangement.	Yearwood overcomes handicap of being the first country singer to have to sing the word "ye" in a non-Christmas song.	7.6
Newcomer pulls it off without breaking a sweat and is now ready for an even greater challenge—sustaining a career (see page 58).	Rallies hard to overcome clumsy lyrics like "You are the best your country has to offer/And no matter if you lose, you have won."	8.4
Strong out of the starting blocks, but Glover oversings last verse, trouncing Lennon's lyrics in the process.	Little, except for re-creating Lennon's trademark "yoo-hoo-oo-oo."	4.6
Summer's booming throat easily outmuscles chirpy tone of folkie Griffith and Rico Suave flavor of Mavericks leader (and Cuban-American) Malo.	Each singer required to go bilingual (Griffith in French, Malo in Spanish), but Summer's far trickier German accent makes a mad dash for first place.	5.8
G stumbles over the hokey "Little Drummer Boy" percussion flourishes.	Simplistic melody, which could double as theme music for Hallmark TV special, doesn't require G's acrobatic sax noodling. Dogs forever grateful.	3.0
Estefan gives her upper range a real workout, managing to make herself heard above the roar of the gospel backup.	Sounds suspiciously similar to Estefan's string of post-accident comeback ballads. Penalty!	6.0

TONY RICH PUTS CROSSOVER SUCCESS INTO 'WORDS'

STRIKING IT RICH

The singer hits pay dirt with a dynamite first disc and top 10 smash. BY TOM SINCLAIR

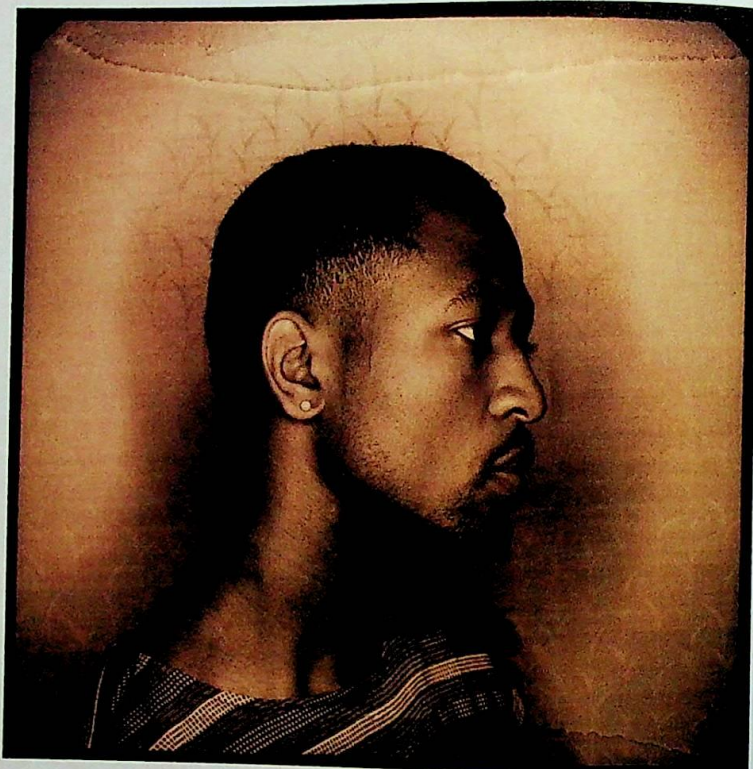
POP-R&B wunderkind Tony Rich is resigned to the ironies of being a crossover artist. When "Nobody Knows," Rich's breakthrough top 10 single, came out, "program directors at black radio said, 'That's not a black record,'" recalls the 24-year-old singer-songwriter-producer-multi-instrumentalist. "Then it started climbing the pop charts, and they changed their tune. I expect black radio will be more open to the next single."

No doubt. "Like a Woman," the soulful second single from *Words* (LaFace), the Tony Rich Project's debut album, is slated to be released to black radio on May 27, then to pop stations June 10. The video will ship to MTV at the end of May. Given the rapid upward trajectory of Rich's career, "Like a Woman" will not need lady luck to chart.

In the five months since *Words*' release, Rich has vaulted the obscurity-to-ubiquity fence. First came the early success of "Nobody Knows," then a galvanizing appearance at the Grammys, where he and R&B sensation D'Angelo reinvented a medley of Stevie Wonder tunes. Six weeks later, Rich and Joan Osborne brought the house down at the *VH1 Honors*, delivering smoldering duets of the Stones' "Beast of Burden" and Al Green's "Let's Stay Together." In the same broadcast Rich took part in an all-star finale, a rousing rendition of Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes," featuring Gabriel, Osborne, Natalie Merchant, Gloria Estefan, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

Receiving the imprimatur of such an elite corps is the stuff of crossover dreams, and Rich says he's "thrilled" by all the attention. Still, he has no stomach for humble pie. "I knew it would happen," he says. "I put a lot of work into my music, and when you put a lot of work into anything, you expect returns."

Rich began developing his sensuous, moody music (think: new jack swing for folkies) as an adolescent in Detroit, where he thrived on an eclectic diet of rock, pop, rap, and funk. The son of a piano-playing father, Rich remembers spending endless hours in his room, composing songs on an acoustic guitar and drawing inspiration from a diversity of artists, including Tracy Chapman, Bruce Springsteen, Prince, and Tom Petty.



HIGH PROFILE: The pop-soul singer's audience is broad-based, but is he setting boundaries?

A fortuitous introduction to LaFace Records copresident Antonio "L.A." Reid several years ago led to an upstart career as a producer, writer, and remixer for such R&B and hip-hop artists as Toni Braxton, Pebbles, and TLC. Rich insists, however, that he had zero interest in becoming "a straight-up R&B artist. I always wanted to appeal to the world."

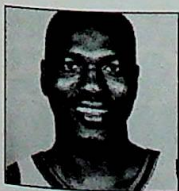
Such grand ambition has not come without controversy. Rich recently withdrew from this summer's much anticipated Smokin' Grooves tour (featuring Fugees, Cypress Hill, A Tribe Called Quest, Busta Rhymes, Spearhead, and Ziggy Marley & the Melody Makers), passing up a plum opportunity to heighten his already high profile. Sources close to the singer say he agreed to participate before learning of the preponderance of rappers. Why do the immortal words of James Brown—"It's too funky in here"—come to mind?

On the subject, Rich is guarded, a bit agitated, but characteristically forward-looking. "The tour started out one way," he says, "then turned into something different where I didn't really fit, so we had to pull off of that one. But there are a couple of other offers we're looking into. I have to re-plan my whole summer now." ♦

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Hakeem Olajuwon

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Hope for
Children
in War

THE WEEK

SINGLES

COOLIO "It's All the Way Live (Now)" (*Tommy Boy*) Like an irrepressible bouncing ball, Coolio bobs through this forgettable feel-good jam, dug out of the vaults for the *Eddie* soundtrack. His charm, as usual, lies in his heavy-lidded delivery, slacker-than-thou attitude, and the sense that he recorded this, bong in hand, while still in his pajamas. Unfortunately, the tune lacks the sharp humor and social consciousness that make his best work stand out. **B-** —Dimitri Ehrlich

POP/ROCK

COLOR ME BADD Now & Forever (*Giant*) Whatever annoyingly infectious quality this male quartet once possessed is gone. Their latest sex-you-up songs are plagued by incongruously sweet crooning and sassless rap, and their attempts at lovelorn balladry convey no real pain or anguish. Not even the bump-'n'-grind groove work of Babyface, Boyz II Men, Jon B., and others can rescue these soul-challenged pretty boys from impotence. **D** —Carter Harris

THE POSIES Amazing Disgrace (*DGC*) Grungy guitars, angst-ridden lyrics, and titles like "Daily



EDDIE MADE: Coolio's latest fails to live up to his "Gangsta's Paradise"

Mutilation" and "Hate Song"—can this really be the fourth album from those oh-so-young-and-fragile lads who used to craft such ingenious Hollies/Beatles/Kinks pastiches? It is, but thankfully, the boys just blow off steam on a few tracks. Elsewhere, they continue their crusade to bring the magic of '60s pop into the '90s. Aching melodic tracks like "Please Return It" should win them a few converts. **A-** —Tom Sinclair

FLACO JIMENEZ Buena Suerte, Señorita (*Arista Texas/BMG*) Jimenez, a squeeze-box legend long before he became one fourth of the Texas Tornados, returns to his roots on this all-Spanish *conjunto* record. By mixing polka and waltz rhythms with Mexican folk flavors, he conjures up images of old-world Europe and Mexican dance halls, where anything can—and does—happen. **B** —Alanna Nash

SOCIETY OF SOUL Brainchild (*LaFace*) Despite one too many didactic spoken-word interludes, Society of Soul's debut has an invitingly smooth and funky R&B vibe, thanks to production by Organized Noize (who account for three of the Atlanta crew's five members). The nearest reference point is Curtis Mayfield, though this is a communal effort with updated beats, soothing choruses, and hope-filled lyrics: redemption songs for the matured hip-hop set. **B** —CH

PATTY GRIFFIN Living With Ghosts (*A&M*) If earnestness is the bane of the unplugged artist, this 31-year-old Bostonian shows promise simply in dodging that first obstacle. But her heartbroken (naturally) lyrics and Rickie Lee Jones vocals only slightly tweak the familiar girl-with-guitar scenario, producing a debut that's more pleasant than powerful. **B** —Nisid Hajari

SCORPIONS Pure Instinct (*Atlantic*) Germany's metal ambassadors go after the adult contemporary deutsche mark: Of 11 tracks here, 9 are ballads. One exception, "Stone in my Shoe," turns a Who riff into a rock-stomp as uplifting and straightforward as any this year, the last thing you'd expect from these guys. But the rest of the album, despite gothic moodiness from some classical violins, is bloated slush. **C+** —Chuck Eddy

PORNO FOR PYROS Good God's Urge (*Warner Bros.*) Two years of studio work should have produced a well-honed sophomore disc from ex-Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell and his revolving crew of band mates (including bassists extraordinaire Mike Watt and Flea). But *Urge* seems to owe more to the group's frequent surfing vacations: The dissonant soundscapes create annoyingly inert ambient music that never congeals into the Art to which they apparently aspire. **C-** —NH

THE WALLFLOWERS Bringing Down the Horse (*Interscope*) If the swirling organ, chesty rasp, and sleek phrasing are any indication, Jakob Dylan plans no major changes in the family style. The combination of T-Bone Burnett's atmospheric production and the young Dylan's sly songwriting honors the past while giving the proceedings a modern patina. **B** —Steven Mirkin

BASEHEAD Faith (*Imago*) Having abandoned his obsession with beer, Basehead's Michael Ivey is now inebriated by a higher power. Fortunately, his newfound faith hasn't curtailed his humor, his drawling sensuality, or his sense of musical adventure. With songs about Betty Ford, Jesus Christ, and a bad boy named "Lucy," Basehead offers avant-Christian funk for people who like to think. **A-** —DE



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WINNERS
OF THE WEEK

Bone Thugs-N-Harmony

"Tha Crossroads," the Oakland rappers' latest single, hit No. 1 after just two weeks in release, tying the record set in 1964 by "Can't Buy Me Love."

TOUR
OF THE WEEK

Ozzy Osbourne's 'Retirement Sucks'

It's unlikely that his pubescent fans will relate to the name of Ozzy's current outing. How about *Junior High Sucks?*



THE SPECIALS Today's Specials (Virgin) The perpetrators behind this anemic collection of far-flung covers (Peter Tosh, the Clash) claim they aren't attempting to re-create the original rambunctious, politically plugged-in early-'80s British ska outfit. But they're obviously not above trading on the band's good name, even without chief songwriter Jerry Dammers and essential vocalist Terry Hall. For shame. **C-** —Mike Flaherty

MONIFAH Moods...Moments (Universal) Monifah attempts to establish herself in the Mary J. Blige mold of R&B/hip-hop divas. She's at her best when she lets emotions take control of her well-trained voice, as they do on her hit, "I Miss You (Come Back Home)." Some of the material falls flat, but all in all *Moods...* is a very promising debut. **B** —Laura Jamison

N. RAVIKIRAN, TAJ MAHAL, AND V.M. BHATT Mumtaz Mahal (Water Lily Acoustics) Bhatt, a remarkable, culture-weaving Indian slide guitarist, played an acclaimed duet with Ry Cooder on the album *A Meeting by the River*. Bhatt's meeting with Taj Mahal—and Ravikiran—if less thrilling, is still enticing, with faintly exotic treatments of Mahal staples like "Stand by Me." A little more Eastern spice in the East-meets-West soup would have been nice. **B-** —Josef Woodard

SOUNDTRACKS

VARIOUS ARTISTS The Cable Guy (Work) Cracker, Toadies, Silverchair, and Cypress Hill contribute previously unreleased mediocrities to this testosterone-targeted film accessory. More gratifying are Porno for Pyros' and \$10,000 Gold Chain's covers of Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground, respectively, and Überclown Jim Carrey's predictably wacky, though irresistible, take on Jefferson Airplane's "Somebody to Love." **B-** —MF

VARIOUS ARTISTS The Craft (Columbia) The album for this teen-witches romp is more like a trip to hell's lounge, as alterna-rockers both worthy (Juliana Hatfield) and slack (Tripping Daisy) toss off edgeless, clubbified covers of songs by the Beatles, Harry Nilsson, the Cars, the Smiths, and others. The hex with it. **D** —DB

REISSUES

VARIOUS ARTISTS Cowabunga! The Surf Box (Rhino) This four-CD, 81-track behemoth surveys the history of this distinctly American and strangely enduring hybrid: South Pacific-inflected, reverb-drenched rockabilly enhanced by once-revolutionary studio technology. Ranging from such trailblazers as the Chantays and Dick Dale to '90s revisionists like Man Or Astro-Man? and Laika & the Cosmonauts, it's a can't-miss romp for aficionados that will also jazz dabblers. **A-** —MF

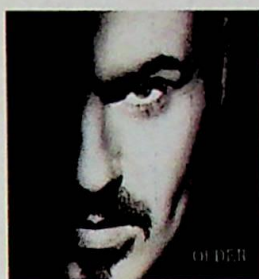
COUNTRY

DAVID LEE MURPHY Gettin' Out the Good Stuff (MCA) David Murphy may call himself a genuine redneck on one of the album's songs, but it's really a rocker's heart that beats here. As on his debut, this fist-in-the-glove follow-up finds different ways of getting at familiar tales, especially the loneliness of the restless misfit, "born with the gift of a hard way to go." Think of Steve Earle without the danger, the anger, or the poetry. **B** —AN

THE CHARTS

'OLDER' NO RISER

GEORGE MICHAEL'S services may have been the most expensively procured in music biz history, factoring in not just his own contract but the estimated \$40 million DreamWorks paid his former company, Sony, to release him. Presumably, then, the singer



and his new label were hoping for a splashier debut than No. 6 for *Older* (right), Michael's first album in six years. But his I-want-your-casual-sex single, "Fastlove," is off to a fast start, so there may be extended life in the old boy yet. It may be too late, though, for the troubled Stone Temple Pilots, who go a long way toward disproving the maxim that any publicity is good publicity by slipping to No. 21 after just eight weeks.

POP ALBUMS

WEEKS ON CHART

1	1	FUGEES	<i>The Score</i> , Ruffhouse/Columbia	14
2	3	ALANIS MORISSETTE	<i>Jagged Little Pill</i> , Maverick/Reprise	49
3	2	CELINE DION	<i>Falling Into You</i> , 550 Music/Epic	10
4	5	HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH	<i>Fairweather Johnson</i> , Atlantic	4
5	6	DAVE MATTHEWS BAND	<i>Crash</i> , RCA	3
6	—	GEORGE MICHAEL	<i>Older</i> , DreamWorks	1
7	8	TRACY CHAPMAN	<i>New Beginning</i> , Elektra	27
8	7	THE CRANBERRIES	<i>To the Faithful Departed</i> , Island	3
9	9	BROOKS & DUNN	<i>Borderline</i> , Arista	5
10	10	RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE	<i>Evil Empire</i> , Epic	5

R&B ALBUMS

1	1	FUGEES	<i>The Score</i> , Ruffhouse/Columbia	14
2	—	THE ISLEY BROTHERS	<i>Mission to Please</i> , Island	1
3	2	SOUNDTRACK	<i>Sunset Park</i> , Flavor Unit/EastWest	5
4	5	SWV	<i>New Beginning</i> , RCA	4
5	4	GETO BOYS	<i>The Resurrection</i> , Rap-A-Lot/Noo Trybe/Virgin	8
6	3	KIRK FRANKLIN & THE FAMILY	<i>Whatcha Lookin' 4</i> , Gospo Centric	4
7	7	2PAC	<i>All Eyez on Me</i> , Death Row/Interscope	4
8	—	LUKE	<i>Uncle Luke</i> , Luke/Island	1
9	10	R. KELLY	<i>R. Kelly, Jive</i>	27
10	6	CELLY CEL	<i>Killa Cali, Sic Wid It</i> , Jive	3

JAZZ ALBUMS

1	1	CASSANDRA WILSON	<i>New Moon Daughter</i> , Blue Note	11
2	2	HERBIE HANCOCK	<i>The New Standard</i> , Verve	11
3	6	JOE SAMPLE	<i>Old Places Old Faces</i> , Warner Bros.	11
4	—	MILES DAVIS	<i>Live Around the World</i> , Warner Bros.	1
5	5	SOUNDTRACK	<i>Leaving Las Vegas</i> , Pangaea/I.R.S.	28
6	4	SOUNDTRACK	<i>The Bridges of Madison County</i> , Malpaso/Warner Bros.	51
7	3	VAN MORRISON WITH GEORGIE FAME & FRIENDS	<i>How Long Has This Been Going On</i> , Verve	19
8	10	SOUNDTRACK	<i>Kansas City</i> , Verve	2
9	7	TONY BENNETT	<i>Here's to the Ladies</i> , Columbia	30
10	8	ELLIS & BRANFORD MARSALIS	<i>Loved Ones</i> , Columbia	15

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The Studios' Net Worth

With the summer's potential movie blockbusters rolling into theaters, Hollywood fields a slate of big-screen websites in the hopes of capturing hearts and wallets. **BY TY BURR**

IT'S AMAZING how rapidly tomorrow's breakthrough can become today's cliché. In the seven years since the World Wide Web was invented, commercial movie sites have mutated from tentative, sludgy, and—considering the competition—reasonably cool online experiments into often dull edifices of Hollywood propaganda. These days, any movie with even a hope of appealing to a youthful or upscale audience has to plaster a URL (Uniform Resource Locator, or, in plain English,

Web address) across its ads and posters if it doesn't want to seem out of touch.

Clearly, the Web has the potential to be something more than a marketing department's new toy. But what? Can multimedia enhance, even improve upon, the experience of a two-hour flick? Partial answers are popping up on websites devoted to this summer's big movies; while sites for some much-hyped films, such as Disney's *The Rock*, with Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage, hadn't launched at press time, the ones currently available run the gamut from cynical placeholders

to enjoyable online fun houses.

At the downscale end are sites for the upcoming **THE NUTTY PROFESSOR** and **DRAGONHEART**, available at the MCA/Universal Cyberwalk (<http://www.mca.com>). Both offer a conventional movie trailer for download as well as a short, diverting trailer enhanced with Shockwave—essentially a chunk of multimedia animation—and that's it. (If your Web browser can't handle Shockwave software, you don't even get that much.) Perhaps there'll be more content when the films open later this month, but for

now these sites pull off the unthinkable: They make coming attractions a chore.

By contrast, Paramount's sharply designed **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE** website (<http://www.missionimpossible.com>) is a big shiny machine bent on erasing the old TV show from your mind and replacing it with the buff new Tom Cruise version. While some of the areas are still under construction, there are dossiers containing info about cast members from Cruise to (say it with me, now) Ingeborga Dapkunaite, plus photos, audio and film clips, production sketches, and the inevitable pitch for T-shirts and toys. There's also an elaborate contest co-sponsored by Apple that requires you to register a little too much demographic information for comfort (an E-mail address is one thing, but a phone number?). For all the sleek Web chic on display, though, it's still a pure promo site; the links page directing you to a handful of corporate websites makes that clear.

Twentieth Century Fox's site for the upcoming alien-attack movie **INDEPENDENCE DAY** (<http://www.fox.com> or—much faster—<http://www.id4.com>) provides visitors with a wealth of links to websites dealing with UFOs and paranoid government-conspiracy theories. There's also a surprisingly witty poll, a chance to send in your own "encounter," and the de rigueur Shockwave gizmos. In fact, there's almost *too* much here—and it's not particularly well organized or easily navigable. Poking around in "Area 51" sent me to a related article at *High Times* magazine's website—with no way to get back to the Fox site. And the gimmicky little animations that clutter up the pages—the famous Fox logo complete with moving searchlights, for instance—are a bandwidth-hogging annoyance.

Only Warner Bros.' **TWISTER** (<http://www.warnerbros.com>) site manages to extend the concept of the disaster flick it's promoting in ways both informative and amusing. (Yes, Time Warner is this magazine's parent company, but no one has sent me any checks, okay?) To get to the good stuff, you have to pass a five-question "Storm Chaser Test"—it's just hard enough that you could refer to the included articles but not so difficult that you can't bluff your way through. From there, you click your way through a drolly creative storm chase: stills from the

film accompanied by text that gooses you through the plot. Click on a recurring image in the photos and you'll be rewarded with more than the usual multimedia flotsam: on-set photos, special-effects sketches, storyboards, a trailer that was shown in theaters. You can get all that plus cast and crew bios, Internet postcards, and

more when you reach the end—but for once, a site makes getting there half the fun. The Web has a ways to go before it provides an experience anywhere near as compelling as a movie—but at least the promos are beginning to look better. *Professor and Dragonheart*: **C-** *Mission: B* *Independence Day*: **C** *Twister*: **B+**

10 STUPID QUESTIONS

THE TRIUMPH OF WILL

HE PLAYED COMDR. WILL RIKER, second-in-command to Patrick Stewart's Picard on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, but as a director, Jonathan Frakes takes orders from no one—be it on the brand-new CD-ROM *Star Trek Klingon* or the next *Star Trek* movie, which he's currently shooting in Hollywood. We caught up with Frakes between takes and launched some interrogatory flak across his starboard bow. —Bob Strauss

1. What's the most difficult thing you've ever told a Klingon actor to do? Learn the Klingon national anthem. That took the better part of the night when we were shooting the CD-ROM.

2. What's your favorite word in the Klingon language? *cha'Dich*. It's your second, the guy who carries your sword.

3. The Klingons challenge the Dallas Cowboys. Who wins? I don't think the Cowboys would even come onto the field. They'd be scared off by the Klingon national anthem.

4. If you could cast your wife, General Hospital's Genie Francis, in a Trek role...? She'd be a great Romulan. Very intelligent, cool, and controlled.

5. Which is more comfortable: CHAIRMAN: Frakes takes command on the CD-ROM set the captain's chair on the Enterprise or the director's chair on the Star Trek set? The captain's chair—but it's ergonomically designed for Patrick Stewart's butt.

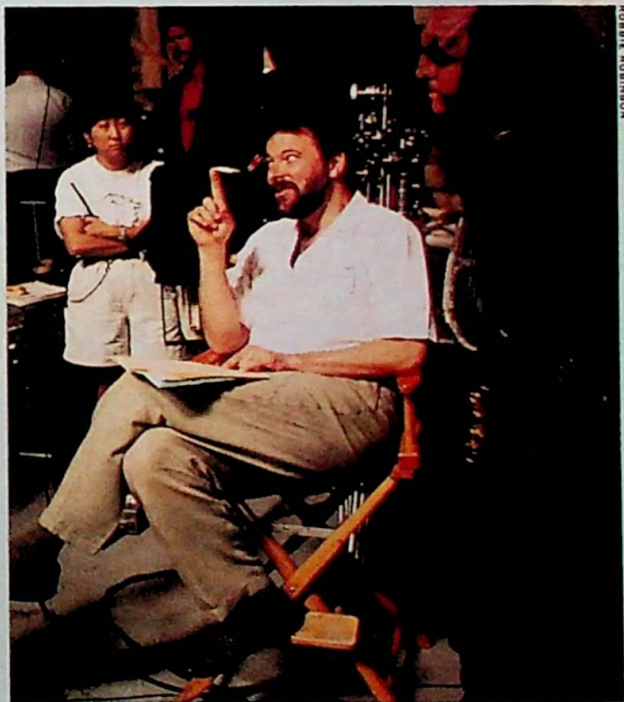
6. Ever sit through a Klingon makeup session? I've never been a Klingon. But I've been other kinds of monsters in drag makeup.

7. What's your favorite Klingon dish? *Gach*. I like *gach* (serpent worms). And I once ate a live grub worm in a *Star Trek* episode.

8. Who'd be more favorable to Klingon immigration—Bill Clinton or Bob Dole? Clinton—years ago we sent him a birthday video from the bridge. Plus I think he's actually had contact with Klingons.

9. Has anyone ever told you that you look like Potsie from Happy Days? Unfortunately. But...that's not fair to him. I thought the beard would cover it up.

10. How many Klingons does it take to screw in a lightbulb? Oh, come on.



THE WEEK

WEBSITES

CAFÉ LOS NEGROES (<http://www.losnegroes.com>) With its obligatory chat about "colorizing cyberspace" (featuring ex-Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid and playwright Ntozake Shange), graffiti art, fashion, and a poem or three, *Café* is supposed to resemble a cool cyberbar whose habitués include the black arts vanguard (with a nod to Hispanic culture). But there's just not enough here to make a real statement. Ironically, the diary of *Paper Magazine* contributor McLean Greaves is as close as the site comes to that. Its entries range from gossip items on such glitterati as supermodel Veronica Webb to a chilling account of seeing a neighbor get shot down on the street. Greaves' freewheeling style makes a quick bite here palatable. **B** —Don Armstrong

BOOKWIRE (<http://www.bookwire.com>) Although it can't claim much original content, *Bookwire* is no doubt the mother lode of cyberspace-based book info. Its no-frills interface cleanly links to or hosts a dizzying array of locales: libraries;



WEBB ON THE WEB:
Café Los Negroes
highlights the model

author websites (from Anne Rice to Shakespeare); quality, review-oriented journals; "Authors on the Highway," the last word on promotional tours; publisher and bookstore sites; and "the Reading Room," where several hundred books in the public domain can be downloaded free. All of this proves the Web a natural habitat for the literary life. **A** —Megan Harlan

HOME GAMES

SAVAGE: THE ULTIMATE QUEST FOR SURVIVAL (Discovery Channel Multimedia, CD-ROM for PC, \$49.95) Not only is the cute lil' lion cub in

this challenging, educational simulation not partial to meerkats, he (or she) is prone to eat them. *Savage* can best be described as Charles Darwin's take on *The Lion King*. As the title beast, players grow from furry infant to roaring adult, marking territory, clawing attackers, and, yes, stalking and killing prey. But the real star here is the scenery, a virtual Serengeti navigable in three dimensions (using the keyboard, mouse, or joystick) and populated by wildebeests, warthogs, and the occasional tourist. **B+** —BS

GEARHEADS (Philips, CD-ROM for PC and Mac, \$39.99) Like a 3-year-old's bedroom, this war of the wind-up toys starts out in orderly fashion but quickly devolves into total chaos. The game involves launching funky playthings ("disasteroids," "deadheads") across a playing field, where they either overwhelm your enemy's opposing pieces—or are flattened by them. Although *Gearheads* looks and sounds great, the action moves too quickly to control easily using the keyboard. Still, it's convenient that the game runs directly from the CD-ROM drive, and it's even nicer that you can play it in a small, relatively unobtrusive window on your desktop. **B-** —BS

overview of the Mesoamerican culture, the disc drops the ball. It includes an interactive time line and maps; striking photos and detailed descriptions of such major sites as Chichén Itzá and Palenque; a section on the 19th-century exploration of ruins; and QuickTime videos on Mayan calendars and ritual life. But it fails to address fully too many substantive issues: How did Mayan civilization evolve and why did it collapse? Without more context, this intellectual excavation is quickly overgrown by a jungle of unrelated facts. **C+** —Peter Kobel

CYBERTALK



WORLD-WISE: Lowe

"IF YOU would've told me that the biggest opening weekend I would be involved with was a film with two comics in very bad wigs, I would have laughed." —Rob Lowe, on the success of *Wayne's World*, on Prodigy

"[DEAN CAIN and I] never really talk about the kissing, but those moments, short or long, just seem honest or spontaneous to the situation...(and aren't too rough on the lips either)." —Teri Hatcher on TV Guide Online

"'SHORT PEOPLE' WAS the worst possible thing I could have had a hit with...like having a hit with 'The Purple People Eater.' The most unsuccessful tour I ever had was when 'Short People' was a No. 1 record! It might have been because of the midgets picketing the show! That's why I married one!" —Randy Newman on Prodigy

ONLINE EVENTS

Scheduled for the weeks of May 27–June 9. All listings are Eastern daylight and are subject to change.

5 / 2 9

◆ **SMOOTHE DA HUSTLER** (Prodigy, *Jump Chat*, 7:30 p.m.) Hip-hopper raps about his debut disc, *Once Upon a Time in America*.

◆ **SPIN DOCTORS** (AOL, Keyword: Live, 8 p.m.) Funk rockers chat about *You've Got to Believe in Something*, their third album.

5 / 3 0

◆ **THE TRAGICALLY HIP** (www.atlanticrecords.com, to be announced) Cybercast concert by the Canadian group.

6 / 4

◆ **ROSEANNE** (Prodigy, *Jump Wisecracks*, 11 p.m.) The veteran actress and *Saturday Night Special* producer vents.

REFERENCE

EXPLORING THE LOST MAYA (Sumeria, CD-ROM for PC and Mac, \$49.95) Although many people think that American sports fans are too obsessed with winning, consider this: When the ancient Maya played games, the losing team was often sacrificed. While this nugget can be found on *Lost Maya*, as an

TV LAND

STUDIO STORE
FROM ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

FRONT



LADY LATTE TEE Wonderful new design! A truly off-the-wall shirt straight from the set of Friends. This is a reproduction of a painting hanging in Central Perk. Great for fans of Friends or coffee fans. Available on domestic cotton in L, XL and XXL.

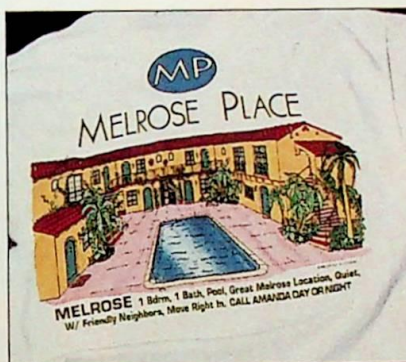
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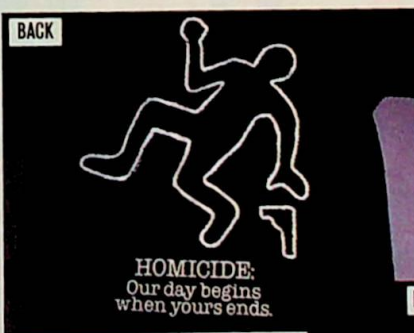
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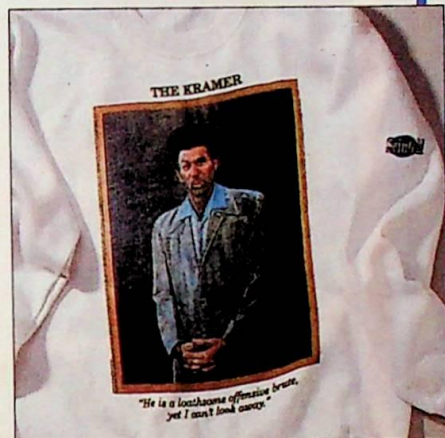
HOMICIDE:
Our day begins
when yours ends.

FRONT

HOMICIDE TEE Created exclusively for us, this tee has the show's official logo on the front and a chalk-drawn outline of a dead body on the back with the line "Our day begins when yours ends". 100% cotton, made in the USA in L, XL, and XXL. ATT092 \$16.95 (XXL \$17.95)

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CHILI RECEPTION:
Travolta and Russo take
a meeting in *Get Shorty*

Elmore the Merrier

For decades Hollywood has tried to target the heart of Elmore Leonard's novels. With the criminally funny 'Get Shorty,' the author finally scores a movie hit. **BY TY BURR**

WHY HAS Hollywood had such trouble doing right by Elmore Leonard? The man has churned out books for more than 40 years—first Westerns, then the pungent crime thrillers that brought him renown—and none of the many movies adapted from his work have quite captured the books' slangy, cynical sensibility. It wasn't until the new-to-video **GET SHORTY** (1995, MGM/UA, R, priced for rental) that all the elements finally jelled,

goosed by a terrific John Travolta performance. Scattered in *Shorty's* dust—and available on video if you're up for a marathon—are films that have tried to grasp Leonard's scrungily appealing worldview and have loused it up.

HOMBRE (1967, FoxVideo, unrated, \$19.98), the first movie to be adapted from a Leonard novel, is one of the best, mostly because it stars Paul Newman as a white man raised by Apache and thus caught between two cultures. Leonard's heroes are surprisingly tricky to play on film—they have to be cool without ever acknowledging that they *know* they're

cool—and Newman is one of the few stars too selfless or ornery to bother with grandstanding. Dryly directed by Martin Ritt, *Hombre* is very much a '60s revisionist Western—a downbeat update of *Stagecoach*—but Newman's no-nonsense magnetism keeps it watchable. The same, unfortunately, can't be said for **VALDEZ IS COMING** (1971, MGM/UA, PG, \$19.98), directed by Broadway vet Edwin Sherin, in which Burt Lancaster (wearing brown pancake makeup and a gloomy-Gus expression) plays a Mexican-American lawman who turns vigilante against a corrupt land baron (Jon Cypher). Slow and

choppy, Valdez manages an astounding feat: It drains Lancaster of personality.

Seeing the market for Western fiction dwindle in the '60s, Leonard turned to crime novels, with increasing commercial and artistic success. One of the best-known films adapted from his work in the genre, **STICK** (1985, MCA/Universal, R, \$14.98), looks great on paper: It has a yeasty drugs-and-money plot set in Miami and a star who, at least at one point in his career, knew from effervescent cool. But actor-director Burt Reynolds, as an ex-con tackling drug runners who murdered his friend, makes the mistake Newman and Travolta don't. He winks at us—and at that moment, the jig is up.

The author himself helped adapt two of his other books in the '80s, which may explain why **52 PICK-UP** (1986, Media, R, for rental only) and **CAT CHASER** (1989, Vestron, R, unrated, for rental only) are so baroquely sleazy. *Pick-Up* features an atypical Leonard hero, a married businessman (Roy Scheider) whose adulterous fling results in blackmail and murder. If Scheider and Ann-Margret as his wife are cold fish, the supporting actors are hot potatoes, especially John Glover as a dandyish villain and Clarence Williams III as a spaced-out thug. Directed by John Frankenheimer—a long way from *The Manchurian Candidate*—*Pick-Up* is reasonably diverting bad-video fun.

And it makes sense, which *Cat Chaser* resolutely fails to do. Here we have Peter Weller as an ex-Marine shuttling between Miami and the Dominican Republic trying to find the woman who saved his life in the 1965 U.S. invasion while he romances his old girlfriend (Kelly McGillis), who's now the wife of the local secret police chief. Got that? *Chaser* was directed by Abel Ferrara—a long way from *Bad Lieutenant*—and it's hard to say what's more ridiculous, the droning narration or McGillis' bottle-blond 'do.

The director of *Get Shorty*, Barry Sonnenfeld, clearly realized what these other filmmakers have not: Elmore Leonard writes comedies. The Hollywood setting too seems to bring out the giddiness in all involved; what fun it must be to make a movie about something you *know*.

With all that, *Get Shorty* traffics in the old Leonard themes: a hero whose innate morality raises him above his gangster milieu; a clash of cultures (here, the loan-

sharking biz and the movie biz); and a love of funky language and oddball characters. As Chili Palmer, Travolta radiates the gentle confidence that need never wink. The barely coherent plot aside, *Get Shorty* is really about the effects of Chili's natural charisma upon men and women

who fake it for a living. After 40 years, Elmore Leonard is still writing about gunslingers, but this one is shooting the breeze, and at last Hollywood has learned to sit back and let him. *Get Shorty*: **A-** *Hombre*: **B** *Valdez Is Coming*: **C** *Stick*: **C** *52 Pick-Up*: **C+** *Cat Chaser*: **D+**

THE MOB GETS INTO THE MOVIE BIZ

GANGSTERS' PARADISE

A LOAN SHARK helps a producer by offering some terrific script advice in *Get Shorty*. But Hollywood has been married to the Mob for a while now. Here are some earlier films in which "break a leg" takes on an entirely new meaning.

◆ **THE GODFATHER** (1972, Paramount, R) If washed-up singer Johnny Fontane (Al Martino) gets the part in that new war picture, it will put him "right up on top again." Trouble is, the studio head (John Marley) won't budge. Luckily, Johnny's got a benevolent godfather (Marlon Brando) and a consigliere (Robert Duvall) who knows how to speak Hollywoodese. So does Johnny get the role? Does a horse's head fit in a bed? **A**

◆ **THE APPRENTICESHIP OF DUDDY KRAVITZ** (1974, Paramount, PG) Every producer has to start somewhere. In Duddy's case, it's bar mitzvah movies. Teamed with a pretentious director ("I see a slow dissolve into the boy's racial memory"), Duddy (Richard Dreyfuss) becomes a mini-mogul. His start-up money comes from a drug smuggler, who suckers Duddy into being his courier. But hey, anybody who makes an art film called *Happy Bar Mitzvah, Bernie!* is probably getting what he deserves. **A**

◆ **BUGSY** (1991, Columbia TriStar, R) Gangster Bugsy Siegel (Warren Beatty) has the acting bug bad. But his high profile in Hollywood doesn't sit well with his Mob buddies. As Meyer Lansky (Ben Kingsley) says, ominously: "For Clark Gable, it's good. For you, it's not so good." He's right—Bugsy doesn't turn out to be much of an actor. But when he shows his screen test at the end of the film, it provokes an explosive response. **B+**

◆ **IN THE SOUP** (1992, Academy, R) The good news is, starving filmmaker Adolpho Rollo (Steve Buscemi) has an investor for his movie. The bad news is, Joe (Seymour Cassel) gets his money from extortion and fencing hot cars. Still, Joe longs to get into motion pictures, to be "in the soup." His touching explanation? "Just put a hit on a guy if you want to leave your mark. I wanna leave a *legacy*." **B**

◆ **MISTRESS** (1992, LIVE, R) Filmmaker Marvin Landisman (Robert Wuhl) has three scary backers, and they're all connected. The scariest is Carmine (Danny Aiello), who wants to make "nice" films because "too many people are gettin' blown apart in this world." When you hear gangster Evan (Robert De Niro) suggest that the film in progress "needs more sex," you get the point of this comedy: Mobsters can give advice just as bad as real producers'. **B+** —Peter Gerstenzang



THE
WEEK

RECENT MOVIES

DUNSTON CHECKS IN Jason Alexander, Faye Dunaway (1996, FoxVideo, PG, \$19.98) What happens when a pet orangutan runs wild in a five-star hotel? Not as much as you'd think, but it isn't for lack of trying. Dunaway camps it up as a Leona Helm-sley type. Rupert Everett sports fake buck teeth as an inept jewel thief. Even Sam (Dunston) gives a tricked-up performance, augmented with vocal effects and human costumes. Everyone tries too hard, except Paul "Pee-wee Herman" Reubens, who doesn't try hard enough as an animal catcher. Too dull for kids, too dopey for adults, the movie should be rented only if your video store is out of *Bedtime for Bonzo*. **C-** —Michael Sauter

WILD BILL Jeff Bridges, Ellen Barkin (1995, MGM/UA, R, priced for rental) Tired yet perennially tested, chased by the past, James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok is as haunted as the Western genre itself. And he's brought growling to life by Bridges, who saves *Wild Bill* from simple dead-horse beating. This elegiac character study finds the famous gunslinger wrestling with a restless spirit, impending blindness, and a rekindled romance with Calamity Jane (the underutilized Barkin). Director Walter Hill (48 HRS.) sad-



SCENTS AND SENSIBILITY: The lead orangutan smells trouble with perfume bottles in *Dunston Checks In*

dles his epic with two-bit execution, but the claustrophobic saloons and chintzy crowd scenes look fine on video. Still, while Hill's hallucinatory script—adapted from a novel and a play—is about the dangers of fostering your own myth, the movie fawns over its character's legend rather than aiming for his murky reality. **B-** —Joe Neumaier

THE DOOM GENERATION Rose McGowan, Johnathon Schaech (1995, Vidmark, R/unrated, priced for rental) Underground director Gregg Araki's latest film maintains a simultaneously giddy and disturbing tone, refusing to take anything, including its own nihilism, seriously. A road movie in which the characters never actually seem to go anywhere, *The Doom Generation* chronicles the violent misadventures of three disaffected youths: Amy (McGowan), the after-hours dream date who

retains a touch of romanticism; her blank boyfriend, Jordan (James Duval); and attractive drifter Xavier (Schaech), whose perversity goes beyond plain polymorphousness. Not for everyone, the film should give fans of *Natural Born Killers* an even more rewarding demonstration of the aesthetics of willful incoherence. **B+** —Glenn Kenny

BABYFEVER Victoria Foyt, Eric Roberts (1994, Fox Lorber, R, priced for rental) No one can accuse independent filmmaker Henry Jaglom of inconsistency. A number of his movies employ a mix of improvisation, scripted story, and video-friendly talking heads—ordinary women (or actresses who admirably look like them) who face the camera to jaw on a given topic. Some viewers may be suspicious of a man so keen on such female trouble as obsessions with food (*Eat-*

ing), getting conned by romance (*Venice/Venice*), and, here, having babies. But Jaglom seems to love women generally—even the ones whose all-consuming desperation for pregnancy borders on the repellent—and his wife especially (she's his star and cowriter). This movie is a valentine to them—and to thirty-somethings for whom too much talk about personal problems is never enough. **B-** —Melissa Pierson

DESIRE Martin Kemp, Kate Hodge (1996, Monarch, unrated, priced for rental) Considering how many moviegoers have suffered from sitting next to idiots drenched in cologne, you'd think that audiences would flock to see a film in which women are ritually murdered after covering themselves in fragrance. Instead, this erotic thriller, about a beautiful ex-cop (Hodge) who must find the serial killer with the olfac-

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SPORTS

MICHAEL JORDAN: ABOVE & BEYOND (1996, CBS/Fox, \$14.98) Chicago Bulls coach Phil Jackson likens Michael Jordan to Michelangelo. And true enough, it's impossible not to enjoy the artistry of the man at work on his 94-foot canvas. Adding to the thrill of the highlights footage are the awestruck descriptions of his moves from fellow players, including Magic Johnson and John Salley. Jordan himself offers some touching emotional revelations, but the storytelling, which follows his life into NBA championship No. 3, through early retirement, his baseball sojourn, and this season, lacks spark. I wish the NBA Entertainment factory that spews out these tapes were as creative as its subjects. Still, it has the rights to the Sistine Chapel: M.J. and an orange ball. **B** —Kate Meyers

LASERDISC

THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt (1919, Image, unrated, \$49.99) The first art-house horror film, *Caligari* and its stylized sets remain Exhibit A for the whole German Expressionist movement. For this new disc version, from a generally crisp print, the movie has been speed-corrected and color-tinted, and as a bonus the original hand-drawn Expressionist title cards (missing from most versions since 1923) have been duplicated. As for audio, on one analog track scholar Mike Budd natters on in an informative (if enervating) manner, while on the digital tracks composer Timothy Brock conducts his creepily effective homage to Kurt Weill. An exemplary presentation of a classic. **A** —Steve Simels

COMING UP

Due in stores the week of May 30–June 5:

CASSETTES

- ◆ **LEAVING LAS VEGAS** (1995, MGM/UA, R) An alcoholic (Oscar winner Nicolas Cage) on one last binge falls for a beautiful prostitute (Elisabeth Shue).
- ◆ **GRUMPIER OLD MEN** (1995, Warner, PG-13) Cantankerous neighbors (Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau) try to save a bait shop from a restaurateur (Sophia Loren).
- ◆ **HEAVY METAL** (1981, Columbia TriStar, R) Never before on video, this animated sci-fi anthology features music by Black Sabbath, Cheap Trick, and others.

LASERDISC

- ◆ **THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA** (1958, Warner, unrated) Wide-screen version of Ernest Hemingway's tale of a man (Spencer Tracy) and a marlin.

TOP VIDEOS

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD GAME

ROLL OF THE DICE, nothing! With the blessed kiss of box office behemoth Robin Williams, *Jumanji* stampedes to the top of the sales and rental charts its first week on video. Barring the occasional bust (*Being Human* and *Toys*, anyone?), Williams has starred in more blockbusters (earning \$100 million plus) since 1986 than any other actor, including Tom Hanks, Tom Cruise, and Jim Carrey. *Mrs. Doubtfire*, Williams' last family film released on video, was 1994's top renter and resided on the sales chart for 52 weeks. Backed by consumer rebates and a \$14 million advertising campaign—Columbia TriStar's biggest ever for a video—*Jumanji* will no doubt linger on the charts as long.



LAST WEEK TOP 10 TAPE RENTALS

	LAST WEEK	TOP 10 TAPE RENTALS	WEEKS ON CHART
1	—	JUMANJI Robin Williams, Columbia TriStar	1
2	4	MONEY TRAIN Wesley Snipes, Columbia TriStar	4
3	1	IT TAKES TWO Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, Warner	2
4	—	THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT Michael Douglas, Columbia TriStar	1
5	—	POWDER Sean Patrick Flanery, Hollywood	1
6	3	THE BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY Clint Eastwood, Warner	4
7	11	DEAD PRESIDENTS Larenz Tate, Hollywood	2
8	7	SEVEN Brad Pitt, New Line	8
9	2	WAITING TO EXHALE Whitney Houston, FoxVideo	4
10	5	TOM AND HUCK Jonathan Taylor Thomas, Walt Disney	3

TAPE SALES

1	—	JUMANJI Robin Williams, Columbia TriStar, \$19.95	1
2	2	THE ARISTOCATS Animated, Walt Disney, \$26.99	4
3	3	IT TAKES TWO Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, Warner, \$22.98	2
4	1	WAITING TO EXHALE Whitney Houston, FoxVideo, \$19.98	4
5	—	WILLOW Val Kilmer, Columbia TriStar, \$14.95	1
6	—	DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE Bruce Willis, FoxVideo, \$19.98	1
7	—	HOOK Robin Williams, Columbia TriStar, \$14.95	29
8	4	BABE James Cromwell, MCA/Universal, \$22.98	9
9	5	TOM AND HUCK Jonathan Taylor Thomas, Walt Disney, \$19.99	3
10	—	DIE HARD TRILOGY Bruce Willis, FoxVideo, \$44.98	1

2 WEEKS AGO FITNESS TAPE SALES

1	9	THE FIRM: NOT-SO-TOUGH AEROBICS BMG, \$14.98	3
2	1	THE GRIND WORKOUT: FITNESS WITH FLAVA Sony, \$12.98	19
3	6	THE GRIND WORKOUT: HIP HOP AEROBICS Sony, \$12.98	47
4	5	PAULA ABDUL'S GET UP AND DANCE! LIVE , \$14.98	35
5	3	THE FIRM: BODY SCULPTING BASICS BMG, \$19.98	15
6	16	THE FIRM: LOWER BODY SCULPTING BMG, \$14.98	3
7	2	CLAUDIA SCHIFFER: PERFECTLY FIT ABS CBS/Fox, \$14.98	17
8	4	THE FIRM: 5 DAY ABS BMG, \$14.98	31
9	7	THE FIRM: UPPER BODY BMG, \$14.98	21
10	18	YOUR PERSONAL BEST WITH ELLE MACPHERSON Buena Vista, \$19.99	69

SOURCE: VIDEO BUSINESS FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 19, 1996
FITNESS DATA: BILLBOARD FROM THE ISSUE DATED MAY 25, 1996

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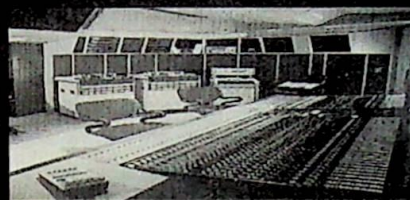
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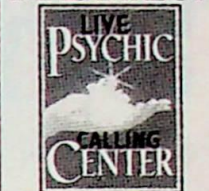
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ENCORE

Sophisticated Gentleman

BY DAVID HAJDU

Twenty-two years after his death, jazz icon Duke Ellington has never been more popular



IN HIS SOLITUDE: Though best known for hit songs such as "Satin Doll" and "Sophisticated Lady," Ellington (shown at work in the late '50s) also created scores for films and ballets

WITH ROCK & ROLL replacing the swingin' sound on the pop charts in the early '60s, Columbia Records canceled Duke Ellington's recording contract. One of the company's executives broke the news bluntly with words that, in retrospect, seem ironic: "You're just not selling records."

"I'm puzzled," said Ellington. "I thought *you* were supposed to sell records and I was supposed to make music."

That he did—from the 1920s, for more than half a century, obsessively driven by an inexhaustible muse that stopped for no trend. The creator of more than 3,000 musical works, Ellington composed or co-composed film scores (*Anatomy of a Murder*), Broadway musicals (*Beggar's Holiday*), ballet scores (*The River*), and concert pieces both for his own ensemble and symphonies (*New World A-Comin'*), as well as dozens of hit songs ("Mood Indigo," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore"). All the while, he

maintained his own orchestra of virtuosos and a ludicrously grueling 12-month-a-year touring schedule. If you went to his 1974 spring show at the Multi-Purpose Building in Rolla, Mo., you saw Ellington make one of his last appearances, eight weeks before he died on May 24 of lung cancer at age 75.

Since his death, however, the music Ellington made has prevailed over all the record-company types he suffered in his time. Today, not only is he regarded as one of the century's most original composers, but he is moving more product than ever before. There are now more than 1,500 CD releases bearing his name in print, the largest catalog in jazz and one of the largest in any genre. Meanwhile, ensembles such as the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra are now performing Ellington's work with all the reverence traditionally granted the classical canon.

He would have reveled in it. Raised in a middle-class black section of Washington, D.C., Edward Kennedy Ellington earned his lifelong nickname as a young boy, through his practiced air of privilege. "The old man always thought of himself as a real aristocrat—he valued respect above all else and worked his whole life for it," said Ellington's son, Mercer, who took over his father's orchestra in 1974. (Mercer himself died at the age of 76 earlier this year, leaving the orchestra in the hands of his daughter Mercedes.) "He's what jazz is," says trumpeter-composer Wynton Marsalis, who's carrying on the Ellington tradition for the '90s. "His music sounds like America." ♦

TIME CAPSULE

May 24, 1974

MOVIEGOERS made *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* a runaway hit; *All in the Family* gave TV viewers a Bunker mentality; readers embraced Richard Adams' *Watership Down*; and a clothed Ray Stevens took "The Streak" to No. 1.

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